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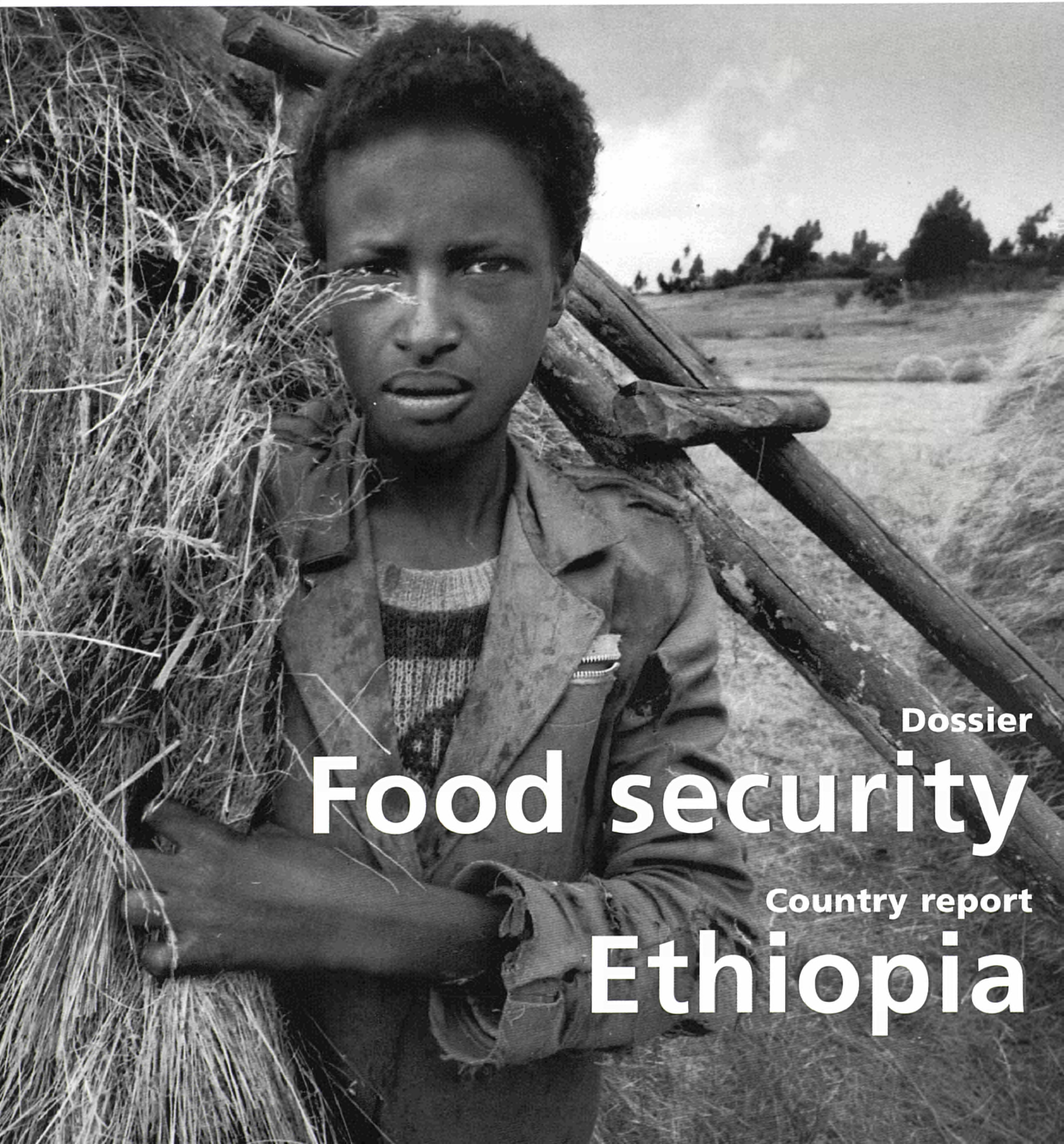

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***The ACP-EU Courier*** is the voice of the ACP-EU partnership in political, economic and social cooperation. This relationship can be traced back 45 years to the Treaty of Rome. The two sides have set up joint institutions and are involved in an ongoing political dialogue.
The partnership was last renewed on 23 June 2000 with the signing of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, covering a 20-year period.
As well as the political dimension, this agreement provides for intense cooperation in the trade area as the EU seeks to ensure that the ACP countries do not suffer marginalisation in the current multilateral trade negotiations (Doha Round).
The partnership has always focused on development assistance which targets the twin objectives of poverty reduction and sustainable development.
Giving voice to men and women from ninety-three EU and ACP countries across the globe facing the future in a spirit of partnership: that is our mission.


# Reminder

**In the last issue, we published a reader's survey. Replies are coming in, but just a few so far from ACP readers. Your comments are very important to us, so we can provide a magazine which meets your needs and expectations. You can reply online at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/publications/publications_courier_en.cfm**


# Editorial

## A major step on a long road

This edition of the *Courier* coincides with the entry into force of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

Three years ago in Benin's capital city, Cotonou, the Partnership Agreement was signed between 77 ACP states and the EU. The Agreement has now been ratified and can be fully applied. This is an important milestone in relations between the EU and the ACP Group.

For it to come into force, the Agreement had to be ratified by two-thirds of the ACP states (51 out of 77), the 15 EU member states, and the European Community. However, most of the provisions of the Agreement are already being implemented by virtue of a decision of the ACP-EC Council of Ministers.

It is a significant event, involving more than half the countries on the planet. Inevitably the war in Iraq casts a long shadow over that stage and over every event that takes place on it. But times of conflict put a premium on stable international relations, on the ability of diverse cultures and economies to work together through dialogue and negotiation. The Cotonou Agreement provides a framework in which to move towards a more equitable and therefore stable world.

Poverty eradication, sustainable development and the gradual integration of the ACP countries into the world economy – these are the goals of the partnership. The United Nations' commitment to reducing by half the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by the year 2015 gives it the vision.

The Agreement is built on three interlinked components – political dialogue, trade and investment, and development cooperation.

One of its most prominent innovations is enhanced political dialogue. A broad-ranging and meaningful dialogue characterises relations between the ACP Group and the EU, and this dialogue will contribute to peace, security, and stability.

Progress has been made since the Agreement was signed: 74 country and regional strategy papers and indicative programmes have been prepared, and 51 already signed. Foreseen under Cotonou, negotiations are underway to set up Economic Partnership Agreements, although the negotiations are complex and political resolve will be needed by both sides.

It will surely be a long road from here to the point where we can say we have done what we set out to do in Cotonou. But 1 April marked a first step and a big step. At a time of uncertainty in an uncertain world, that is indeed worth celebrating.

# Regional integration and development: the challenges facing SADC

The Southern African region is characterized by a multiplicity of regional integration initiatives and institutions. Despite substantial development over the past years, there is still a long path ahead. The *Courier* met Dr Prega Ramsamy, Executive Secretary of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), to discuss SADC's activities and project interventions to maximize the economic benefits for the broader region.

Maurizio Carbone

***There is an abundance of regional organisations, in Southern Africa. Some countries even belong to more than one. Does SADC have a distinctive approach to development?***

Each of these organisations was created for a definite purpose. SADC started in April 1980 as the Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference. At that point in time, SADC was concerned with the integration of the frontline states but also on reducing their dependence on apartheid South Africa. Then, with the total liberation of the Southern African countries, our leaders decided to move forward on the integration agenda. They transformed SADC from a coordinating conference into a development organisation. There were substantial differences in the way SADC looked at issues of regional cooperation integration, in comparison with other organisations. SADC adopted a development integration approach, which is quite different from a market development approach. In the view of SADC, if we want to integrate our economy, first there are a number of problems to be looked at, such as infrastructure, supply capabilities, high cost of transactions, and capacity in all member states to secure national or regional produce. First we had to liberalise our economies to address these issues. This is in contrast to other organisations, which said, 'let's liberalise trade and goods will flow'. But SADC's view was 'how can goods flow if we don't have infrastructures to support your liberalisation?'.

**"We are going towards the creation of a common market. In so doing we take a step by step approach so that we carry all our member states and we don't lose anybody"**

***This region is founded on economic structures that were based on an import-substitution model. Was this an obstacle to further regional integration?***

Over the years things have evolved. At the beginning there was import substitution, to create industries and employment opportunities. But at the same time high tariffs were meant to protect local industries against international competition. In the 1990s, the majority of countries adopted a trade liberalisation approach, for a number of reasons. First, many of these industries were state owned, and over the years there was no innovation, no replacement of capital, no intense competition to improve. Second, there was an element of subsidy: state owned enterprises were largely subsidised. Third, it was not necessarily true that resources were allocated to the right industries. So, when competition came in, many of these industries collapsed and people lost employment opportunities. The private sector itself was not very active because the system of state control did not allow the private sector to have access to finance and also the banking sector was not properly organised. These were the reasons for liberalisation.

***What was SADC's role in this process of liberalisation? Was it just an observer of events, or was it instrumental in the change?***

In some cases, liberalisation was a result of decisions between countries, and international organisations. Then SADC came in to provide capacity to these countries which allowed them to negotiate tariff reductions amongst themselves, with the trade protocol. For those countries that wanted a systematic approach to liberalisation, to take advantage of the WTO, and of a wide economic space, SADC had a meaningful role.

***Africa in general attracts little foreign direct investment (FDI). The SADC region has experienced some problems of stability. Is there a nexus between instability and FDI?***

If you look at statistics, you find that Angola is one of the countries that has attracted more FDI than any other country in the region. It is not a question of security. It is more a question of the type of project you have. It is true that there are some constraints. First, the smallness of individual markets, and this is where SADC comes in. But I foresee an increase in domestic investment.

***What is the level of savings?***

In some countries, it is at 22%, in others at 25%. But in certain countries it is only at 17% or even lower. This is not enough. People will not save if the rate of inflation is too high: they will be encouraged to consume more. Inflation must be


SADC headquarters in Botswana

reduced. Nine of our member states have a two-digit inflation rate. Our hope is that in few years all our member states will be at one digit. This will increase the level of domestic savings and domestic investment. But besides domestic investment, there is another element: cross-border investment, such as South African investment in Botswana, Botswana investment in Zimbabwe, Mauritius investment in Tanzania. Cross-border investment will bring a sense of belonging in the region, and a sense of stability. Once you have investment in different countries, you would not like these countries to have problems, you would like them to have peace, so that your investment is secure. This commits our countries to working together, and when there are problems they can talk to each other. This also answers your question about the role of SADC, and what our leaders had in mind when they created this organisation.

***Another major concern is about customs unions, which is linked to my previous question of country membership of more than one organisation.***

For SADC we are saying that we will liberalise 85% of our trade in 2008, and 100% in 2012. The customs union can come come into place only when we have a full free trade area. At the same time we need to move fast because the world is moving fast. Within SADC we already have SACU, which is at an advanced stage of integration. We want to get all the SADC member states to the level of that customs union. It is also true that some SADC member states are also members of COMESA, which will have its own customs union in the near future. Obviously you cannot be part of two customs unions at the same time. Countries must choose. If they choose COMESA, then they can no longer be part of the SADC customs union.

***What is SADC doing to foster peace and security in the region?***

The SADC integration agenda is based on two pillars: good economic governance and political stability. We already mentioned the first issue, good economic governance, which implies macroeconomic stability. The second pillar is good political governance. Countries must respect the rule of law, have a democratic system where the judiciary is independent. We now have a new organ, which deals exclusively with politics, defence and security. We expect this organ to foster peace through dialogue. Also, there are several other protocols which are meant to bring stability to the region; a protocol against corruption, small arms, weapons.

***Seven SADC member states are part of the HIPC initiative. Data show that in terms of debt relief there was a decline in debt from US$80 billion to US$69 billion in 2001. Is this enough?***

Our finance ministers asked to make the HIPC initiative more flexible because it was too rigid. Debt relief is critical. One of the things that is crippling our economy is debt. Certain countries are spending about 30% of their national budget servicing debt; very little is left for education, health, paying the civil service. If you compare the per capita health expenditure of some of SADC member states with Europe and the United States you see a big difference: while Europe is spending US $7 per person, we are spending much more in our region. This is obviously a consequence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic which is the greatest concern in our region. We are intensifying our efforts in the provision of basic services to combat major diseases, not only AIDS, but also malaria, cancer, TB.

***Tourism is considered a major engine for growth, especially for this region. Is there a common approach in the SADC region to take full advantage of it? Do you think tourism has suffered from insecurity in the region and because of the September 11 terrorist attacks?***

If you look at statistics, despite September 11, the number of tourist arrivals in Southern Africa has increased. Probably Zimbabwe itself has been affected negatively by its internal problems, but if you look at the region as a whole, SADC is not doing badly. But we need to do more. We have to sell SADC as one destination, as a package, not

sell individual countries. For example, you say that you go to the Caribbean, but you don't say which island you are going to. In Southern Africa, we have a great number of different products: wildlife, eco-tourism, beach tourism, mountains. It is a combination of everything. On top of this we are looking at conservation issues. Tourism should thus be seen as a great potential for this region, but we should not forget other issues such as environment and water conservation. We are addressing all these matters together. We are already working at a sort of 'uni-visa', which will allow people to get a visa for one country and then move around in the region. Of course, because of September 11, we have to be more careful.

***Food security is one of the major concerns for this region at the moment. Could you have done anything to prevent the famine? How do you judge the response from the international community?***

Famine is a combination of problems, which culminates in food shortage. In SADC we have the so-called early warning system. On the basis of our forecasting and past trends, we are able to know what will be the future trend. Last year in March we already knew what was going to happen and we immediately did a needs assessment for these countries. On that basis we were able to make a joint SADC-UN appeal, which has been largely successful. However, in that appeal there were two components: a component of food aid, and a component of non-food items, such as medicines, water, seeds. While we got what we wanted in terms of food aid, we did not get as much as we needed in terms of non-food aid. But my view is that we cannot continue like this: we have land, water, people. Now it is a question of management. For this reason, we are looking at irrigation as one of the key factors, and at other issues, such as agrarian reform, how we can bring extension services to the rural areas, how we can use information technology so that poor farmers don't sell their food to an intermediary. There is food production, but these products cannot be brought from the rural areas to the urban areas because of lack of infrastructures. We should also look at how to store those products. Access to resources is also very important: people should be able to have access to credit facilities to buy the seeds; when they grow, they produce, they sell, and they should also have access to equipment. All these things should be seen as a package to assist the issues of food security.

***Some see GMO food as a solution.***

Well, there are a lot of fears, about markets access, health, cross-pollination. We have discussed this many times at Heads of State level. It was agreed that states should develop national legislation on GMOs.

***Why not make GMO food a regional issue?***

We have a team of scientists studying this whole issue. They have come up with a final report, which has just been presented to the Council of Ministers. They will get together to look at the study's findings and make some decisions by August. The general wisdom, however, is: let all the seeds be milled. The fears are that when the seeds are planted, our access to the EU market would be jeopardised. It is important to look at the long-term consequences of GMO food. Right now people are not looking at that. When you have a GM seed you will be able to use it for some years, then you will have to use fertilisers which change periodically, and thus you become dependent on imports. These are long-term issues which we are trying to address. This is why we must be careful and wait for the results of the study.

***Finally, the relationship between SADC and the European Union. Has anything changed with the Cotonou Agreement?***

The EU is clearly one of our major cooperation partners for several reasons. First because of the long tradition of working together. Now, with the Cotonou Agreement we have built up the necessary capacity to work more closely with the EU. This new partnership provides a framework within which we can collaborate. And then there is the issue of the EU relationship with individual ACP countries. The Cotonou Agreement is a step forward for several reasons. There is the issue of reciprocity, Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), and the involvement of civil society. As for the EPA process, we are still discussing with our member states what should be the framework for our negotiations. Reaching a SADC free trade area will pave the way for EPA negotiations by SADC as a group. ■

The Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), the forerunner of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), was established in April 1980 in Lusaka (Zambia) by nine founding member states: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Declaration and Treaty establishing SADC, which replaced the Co-ordination Conference, was signed in 1992 in Windhoek, Namibia. SADC now has 14 member states: in addition to the nine founding countries, five more (Democratic Republic of Congo, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa) joined SADC over the years. SADC's headquarters are in Gaborone, Botswana. In March 2001, SADC started a reorganisation of its institutions and articulated a more explicit Common Agenda which takes into account a number of principles such as development orientation, subsidiarity, market integration and development, facilitation and promotion of trade and investment. SADC has thus adopted a more centralised approach through which the 21 Co-ordinating Units have been grouped into four clusters, namely: Trade, Industry and Investment; Infrastructure and Services; Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources; Social and Human Development and Special Programmes.

## ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

# Back to smoother waters

The 5th session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly took place in Brazzaville from 31 March to 3 April 2003 in an atmosphere of calm characterised by a practically universal trend towards an easing of tension. Many were expecting stormy debates following the cancellation of the previous meeting in Brussels (November 2002) because of dissension in the ranks over the participation of delegates from Zimbabwe. However, the Congolese capital hosted a Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) ostensibly refocused on its essential role and ready to debate the many issues on its agenda, including the situation in Zimbabwe.

Kenneth Karl

The theme of the formal inaugural speech was substantially that the JPA should continue to play its role in political dialogue to the full and deliberate on a wide range of issues to which it could make a valuable contribution. President of the Republic of Congo, H.E. Denis Sassou Nguesso, presided at the opening ceremony. With a nod to current events, the various speakers made mention of the war in Iraq, although for the most part they concentrated on the importance of the JPA's tasks and the need to strengthen its role. The general opinion was that things should be calmed down somewhat and that the normal course of debate should recommence in the wake of the November events. The Congolese President paid tribute to the solidarity and understanding of JPA members in spite of the many international uncertainties. He emphasised the need to make good any imperfections in the political dialogue by setting up a ministerial-level mechanism to promote dialogue.

Angelo Beda (Sudan), ACP Vice-President of the JPA, replacing Adrien Houngbedji, who had not attended the meeting because of elections at home, brought up a number of important subjects. These included the Millennium Development Goals campaign and the discussion of development issues at international forums, rapid implementation of the European Development Fund (EDF), the forthcoming Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and the creation of standing committees within the JPA, all of which, he maintained, merited the support of all present.

Glenys Kinnock, EU JPA Co-President, stressed the importance of working in partnership and the essential role played by parliamentarians, who are the link between citizens and decisions which affect everyday life. By happy coincidence, the plenary session of this JPA opened on 1 April, the date of entry into force of the 9th EDF.

### A majority against the war in Iraq

Inevitably, events in Iraq were discussed in depth by the JPA, whose role is primarily to pronounce on issues relating to peace, human rights, conflicts, situations of injustice, etc. The plenary session began with a minute's silence for the casualties of the war, with parliamentarians then moving on to a lengthy discussion of this burning topic of current interest. A very large majority of members attending the session was strongly opposed to the war being waged by the UK/US coalition in Iraq, considering it to be in breach of international law. On behalf of his party, the PSE, Miguel Angel Martínez (Spain) described the war as unjustifiable and illegal, and essentially aimed at serving American interests. He then placed on record his opposition to his government's support for the Bush administration. Philippe Morillon (PPE/DE) supported the French position and called for a rapid end to the war. In his opinion, there had been no such thing as a united Europe in this crisis, and he added that, given the prospect of an enlarged Europe, it was imperative that work by the European Convention on the future of the EU should contribute to reform of the CFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy).

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The representative from Angola stated his own country's position, which advocates a peaceful resolution to the crisis under the aegis of the United Nations, with the use of force a last resort. Challenging the dual position of the US administration, Mr Arauna (Niger) stated that dictatorships – all dictatorships – must be fought against. Other parliamentarians expressed their concern at the serious consequences of this war and its destabilising effect not only in the region but in the world as a whole, and the negative effects for the global economy and the UN's credibility. As might have been expected, differences of opinion between EU countries arose once again to some degree during these discussions, dashing any hopes of a common European position on this crisis. A rare dissenting voice in the chamber, Martin Callanan (PPE/DE; GB) unequivocally supported the action being taken in Iraq: "Saddam Hussein's regime is responsible for the worst tragedies. Those who oppose this war should ask themselves how this man could be opposed otherwise". Nevertheless, the JPA concluded debate on this topic by adopting not a resolution but a statement – to applause – with a large majority of members opposing the war. The text states that the war against Iraq is in breach of international law, will have a destabilising effect on the entire region, is unjustified even in the light of the Iraqi regime's scorn for human dignity... A number of participants called for the adoption of a resolution, adding that "with a simple declaration, the JPA is merely seeking to clear its conscience".

### Speeding up trade negotiations and preparing for Cancún

If there is one subject that will undoubtedly appear on the agenda of future sessions of the JPA for many years to come, it is that of trade, firstly because the trade negotiations that began in September 2002 are set to run until the end of 2007, and, secondly, and primarily, because trade is one of the essential pillars of the Cotonou Agreement and has major implications for the ACP countries' socio-economic development. JPA representatives intend, in this regard, to play their role of monitoring negotiations to the full, and therefore lent an attentive ear to the speeches of the main protagonists before embarking upon an in-depth discussion of these issues.

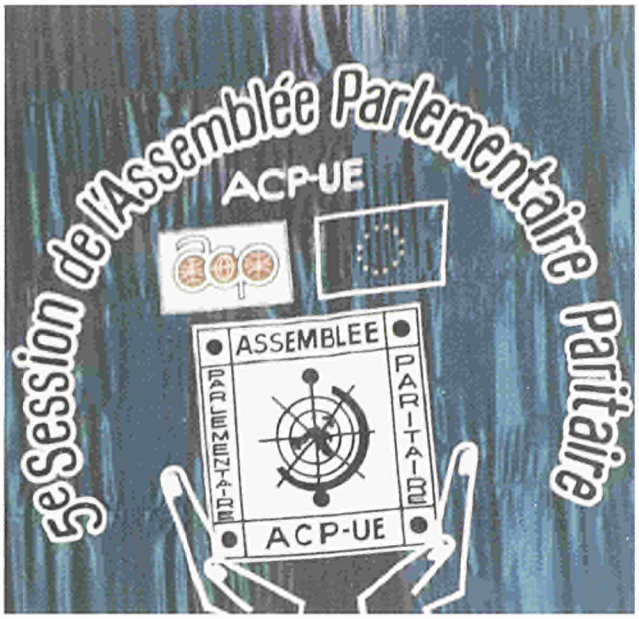
**Trade is one of the essential pillars of the Cotonou Agreement and has major implications for the ACP countries' socio-economic development. Several participants praised the degree of collaboration between the ACP countries and the EU at the Doha meeting, stressing the need for the EU and the ACP countries to submit joint solutions that will become part of the WTO (World Trade Organisation) framework.**

In his statement, European Development Commissioner Poul Nielson referred to the advantages represented by the EPAs, which, he asserted, will promote development of the regional markets necessary to enhancing North/South trade and increasing foreign investment. The aim of the EPAs is to promote sustainable development and to improve competitiveness, but they must, first and foremost, be designed as instruments in the service of development. Although the date of the second phase of the discussions – which is to involve the ACP regions – is fast approaching (September 2003), differences of opinion persist between the two camps on the subject of the first-stage objectives. Moreover, not all ACP regions are yet ready to embark upon negotiations of this type with the EU. According to the Commission, those regions that are up to speed will move on to the next stage and the pace of the negotiations with those who are not will have to be accelerated.

At multilateral level, several participants praised the degree of collaboration between the ACP countries and the EU at the Doha meeting, stressing the need for the EU and the ACP countries to submit joint solutions that will become part of the WTO (World Trade Organisation) framework. They also said that this solidarity will have to be repeated at the WTO Conference in Cancún (Mexico) from 10-14 September 2003. Focusing on current trade negotiations, Mrs Ngollo, Congolese Trade Minister, also expressed a desire to see the ACP countries and the EU form alliances in defence of their common interests at that meeting. In turn, Michel Scarbonchi (GUE/NGL) deplored what he described as the great, but under utilised potential of the ACP/EU bloc within the WTO. South African MP Rob Davis felt that the Doha Development Agenda had not been complied with, and that no genuine progress had been made on either agricultural issues or those relating to Special and Differential Treatment for developing countries, and that Cancún risked being a repetition of Seattle. According to Mr Davis, the JPA's new standing committees could presage improved follow-up to international negotiations. The representative from Mauritius referred to the difficulties the ACP countries experienced in conducting negotiations on two fronts (EPA and WTO) at the same time. During oral questions to the Commission and Council, these two institutions tried to dispel parliamentarians' concerns regarding several matters in connection with trade negotiations.

### Zimbabwe: chronicle of a thaw foretold

None of the many proposed resolutions on Zimbabwe submitted to this session of the JPA garnered sufficient votes to be adopted. In the absence of an agreement (not only on the content of any text, but also on the positions of their authors and the terms employed), members had no choice but to have recourse to the procedure of voting by separate colleges and secret ballot in the case of certain resolutions. Afterwards, Mrs Kinnock stated that, despite the fact that there had been no resolutions on Zimbabwe, the JPA had nevertheless made some progress on that delicate issue thanks to open discussion. She was of the opinion that "things are beginning to move". During discussions prior to the vote, a number of the parliamentarians condemned human rights violations and constant pressure on the press and the opposition in Zimbabwe. John Corrie (PPE/DE; GB) stressed the importance of a resolution if a clear message were to be sent to a regime that simply rides roughshod over its people's rights. According to Zimbabwean




the Courier

MP Mr Mangwana, the situation in his country was quite different. In his opinion, certain countries, such as the UK, could not accept that Zimbabweans were recovering land that belonged to them and that that was why they were meddling in Zimbabwe's domestic affairs. He went on to condemn the UK's failure to fulfil the undertakings made at Lancaster House. For Karin Junker (PSE/D) and Nelly Maes (V/ALE), who had visited Zimbabwe, human rights violations were only too real – there was no conflict between the UK and Zimbabwe, nor between blacks and whites. Above all it was the way in which power was wielded in Zimbabwe that gave them cause for concern. Mrs Junker and Mrs Maes deplored the economic and political debâcle in the country. Louis Straker MP (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) described the JPA as the meeting of a family where it should be possible to discuss problems quite openly. In his eyes, nothing justified the current reign of terror in Zimbabwe, but the UK should fulfil its obligations. A representative of the opposition in Zimbabwe who had been given permission to speak described the abuses and acts of violence of which he personally had been a victim.

Mr Tall (Mali) declared that the consequences of the crisis must indeed be addressed, but the deeper causes must not be overlooked. According to a representative from Uganda, it was essential to break free of the "accusations against accusations" cycle and to find out exactly what was going on if the problem were to be solved. The Zambian representative therefore called for a parliamentary fact-finding mission to be sent to the country. The JPA noted the various positions put forward during the discussions and, through its two Co-Presidents, judged that there had been a fruitful exchange of views even if the path to a normalised situation was still a long way off, adding that progress might take the form of a parliamentary mission to the country. All in all, the JPA had made much progress over recent months.

### JPA innovations: the new standing committees

In a desire to improve its institutional mechanisms in order to meet the challenges of the Cotonou Agreement and increase its involvement in the ACP-EU partnership, the JPA recently set up three new standing committees, which will allow regular, in-depth examination of important cooperation issues and greater involvement on the part of parliamentarians in the partnership.

The committees are:

- **the committee on political affairs:** this committee will address issues concerning political dialogue and institutional development, dealing with aspects inherent to respect for and promotion of human rights, democracy and good governance, and also peace-promoting policies and conflict prevention and resolution. Migration and the relationship of the JPA with other international institutions will also be investigated;
- **the commission on economic development, finance and trade:** this committee will be responsible for aspects connected with economic development, trade cooperation and capacity strengthening, and will also include issues relating to macroeconomic reforms and sectoral economic policies. The new ACP/EU trade agreements (EPAs), market access, integration of the ACP countries into the global economy, working standards, fisheries, food security and rural development will be debated within this forum. The committee will also look at management of the EDF;
- **the committee on social affairs and the environment:** as its name indicates, this committee will be charged with matters of social and human development, infrastructures and social services (health and education). Its remit will also include youth, gender, cultural and environmental issues.

Rules governing the operation of these new committees were set out during a meeting held prior to the JPA in Brazzaville, and they will be monitored by a representative from the European Parliament and a parliamentary representative from an ACP country.

### Other important issues

Several other subjects were discussed during this session of the JPA. A number of participants supported the NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) and called upon the EU and the international community to lend their support to this unique African initiative. The JPA also praised the creation of the International Criminal Court, although some representatives took issue with the policy of the US in seeking to negotiate bilateral immunity agreements preventing various US personnel from being brought before the Court. On the follow-up to the Johannesburg Summit, participants called for the undertakings made at Rio to be complied with and for additional resources to enable the ACP countries to embark upon the road to sustainable development. The issue of Cuba joining the Cotonou Agreement was also addressed, and several declared themselves in favour of the rapid integration of that country into the ACP-EU partnership. On the ACP side also, a working group was created with the task of setting up a new ACP parliamentary assembly. The JPA also devoted time to its workshops, one devoted to peace, conflict prevention and management and the other to environmental protection and commercial navigation on the River Congo. The JPA concluded its work by adopting a dozen resolutions. The next session will take place in October, in Rome. ■

## NGOs remain high on the agenda

# From Clong to CONCORD

CONCORD – a new confederation of European non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for relief and development has just been launched, taking over from the former Liaison Office, (Clong). It will act as an intermediary between European NGOs and EU Institutions. A page is turned, a new chapter begins.

François Lefèbvre

The end of January 2003 saw the official launch of CONCORD before the press, NGOs, the European Commissioner for Development, Poul Nielson, and Belgian Secretary of State for Development Cooperation, Eddy Boutmans. Over and above the mediatory role, the birth of CONCORD lays the foundations for a new form of collaboration between NGOs and for enhanced relations with the EU. With 10 European networks and 18 national platforms from EU Member States and candidate countries, the Confederation of NGOs for Relief and Development represents 1,200 organisations. Three candidate countries have already set up platforms; Malta, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The existing networks – ActionAid Aliance, Aprodev, Caritas Europa, CIDSE, EURODAD, EuronAid, Eurostep, IPPF, Solidar and Terre des Hommes – will soon be joined by Save the Children, VOICE, World Vision, WIDE, EU-CORD, Forum and EPLO.

### A new chapter

Cooperation between the NGO community and the EU dates back to 1976, with the setting up of Clong, the Liaison Committee of NGOs. Its purpose was to facilitate cooperation between development NGOs and the European Commission, the latter providing 85 per cent of its operating budget. The relationship "developed over the years to become a strong liaison with organised consultation and communication on important development policy and implementation issues", said Commissioner Nielson at the CONCORD launching ceremony

Clong introduced and conducted a whole series of initiatives in the areas of development education in Europe and political lobbying. The increasing need for transparency and good governance prompted a financial audit of Clong's accounts. Whilst ruling out any misappropriation of funds, the auditors nevertheless advised Clong to pay back certain funds to the Commission. Following the dissolution of Clong, the Commission and the NGOs drew up the terms for their future relations and proposed the setting up of a new financial structure. Agreements were reached and the new confederation was born, bringing with it renewed cooperation between development NGOs and the Commission. The new structure picks up where Clong left off.

CONCORD president Frans Polman says that the confederation is an expression of "a desire for alliance, solidarity and partnership with our partners in the developing countries". The overall aim of the confederation is to coordinate cooperation between NGOs in order to influence the political debate and to prompt countries to honour their commitments, particularly as regards investing 0.7 per cent of their GDP in development. It also seeks to redefine relations between Northern organisations and their Southern partners and to step up collaboration with the EU institutions. CONCORD undertakes to monitor closely the Convention on the Future of Europe, Commission reform and enlargement, to ensure that development is properly taken into account. According to Commissioner Nielson, there is also a pressing need to prevent the subordination of development aid to foreign policy. This is an issue of concern also to Eddy Boutmans, who, ever since the abolition of the Development Council, has been stressing the importance of restoring development to its place at the top of the political agenda.

European NGO confederation for relief and development

CONCORD

Confédération européenne des ONG d'urgence et de développement

The confederation will carry out its missions through permanent working groups and other thematic, ad hoc working groups. There will be permanent working groups on development and humanitarian aid financing, development education and the European presidencies (held in rotation by each EU member state for six months). Ad hoc thematic groups will deal with current policy issues such as the Cotonou Agreement, trade and development, the financial problems facing developing countries, food security, enlargement, and emergency humanitarian aid.

Given the broad experience of its members, the capacity to represent the joint positions of development NGOs and to disseminate information more rapidly, and thanks to a new agreement signed with the EU, CONCORD represents a real opportunity to improve North-South collaboration and promote sustainable development in the world. ■

## ACP Group

# Trade issues take centre stage on the ACP agenda against a background of uncertainty

For the ACP Group, 2003 will without question be dominated by trade issues. Negotiations on the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) are officially underway between the EU and ACP countries, and the negotiators are now tackling core issues. Attention is also focused on the WTO, where discussions taking place over access to medicines and the liberalisation of agricultural markets are proving difficult. Finally, implementation of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement is also on the agenda.

François Lefèbvre

After the third round of ACP-EU trade negotiations between ACP and EU ambassadors, ACP Secretary-General Jean-Robert Goulongana presented the ACP Group's schedule for 2003. On the list of priorities were implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, the EPAs, and the continuing of negotiations at the WTO.

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When Belgium finally ratified the Cotonou Agreement in January 2003 there were sighs of relief all round: without ratification by all EU member states, and at least two thirds of the ACP countries, funds from the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) could not be released. Following the signature of the partnership agreement in June 2000, more than two thirds of the ACP Group were quick to ratify it. The EU member states were unfortunately less rapid. Temporary measures were taken to prevent any legal void between Lomé and Cotonou but until ratification was completed the agreement could only be partly implemented. With Belgian ratification, the way is now clear. Full implementation is due to begin in April 2003.

### Priorities

Most pressing are the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations, which are foreseen under Cotonou. Negotiations started at the end of September 2002 and are to take place over five years. They aim to redefine the trade regime between the EU and the ACP countries. From the first of January 2008 the old system created under Lomé I will expire, and the new partnership agreements, compatible with WTO rules will come into effect and will be implemented over a 10-year transition period (in some areas 12 years). In trade terms, the EPAs should create free-trade areas between the EU and six different groups of ACP countries, ultimately leading to the abolition of tariff and non-tariff barriers. The negotiators are aware that the road ahead is difficult and there are many issues which will need to be addressed.

The negotiations will take place in two stages: the first (the EU and the ACP Group as a whole) will run until September 2003. The second (the EU and each of the six groupings of ACP countries) from September 2003 until late 2007. According to the ACP Secretary-General, the two parties are on the same wavelength as regards the principles and objectives during this first phase with a view to facilitating progression to the second phase. But differences persist as to how this phase should conclude; the ACP countries want to reach firm commitments to enable them to map out the future agreements between the EU and the ACP entity. The positions agreed upon must guarantee equal treatment for the six different groups but must also guarantee ACP unity. The European delegates, on the other hand, prefer to use the first round to simply clarify positions.

Another stumbling block is financing. Both parties agree that the EPAs are aimed not only at trade liberalisation but must also serve as a weapon in the fight against poverty and a stepping stone to regional integration. For the ACPs, support for development must form the basis of the future agreements, and therefore must be adequately funded. The EU believes that additional funding is not an issue given that existing unused EDF funds are available. Furthermore, the ACP Group considers that major obstacles to increasing ACP production capacity are trade policies and their capacity to conform to standards.

### Overall or separate negotiations?

Here again viewpoints differ. The ACP countries are insisting on separate treatment of six issues: legal aspects, market access, trade issues, services, agricultural produce and fishing. "It is a way of emphasising what is important for us," explained Mr Goulongana, recalling that agricultural and fishing products make up the most part of ACP exports to the EU. The European Union maintains that market access can be treated generally, given that it concerns all products. As regards the gradual lifting of trade barriers, the ACPs want an in-depth examination of the

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**The ACP Secretary-General was critical of the equivocation over poor countries' access to generic medicines as borne out by the failure of the mini-Ministerial conference in Tokyo in February 2003.**

conditions of application of the principle. In their view, barriers must be broken down in a way that takes account of their low level of development and the differences between individual ACP countries.

The ACP Ministerial Trade Committee met in St Lucia on 27 and 28 February, with a mandate of ensuring follow-up of the EPA and WTO negotiations, as well as application of the Cotonou trade provisions. This meeting was followed on 1 March by the mixed ACP-EU Ministerial Trade Committee. The ACP group noted that, because of the "slow pace" of the EPA negotiations and "persistent differences in the points of view of both sides on the objectives and contents of the EPAs", some ACP countries are now "questioning the advisability of launching the second phase of the negotiations at the level of ACP regions, scheduled for September 2003". They call for intensified ACP-EU dialogue at a political level.

The ACP Secretariat must also remain vigilant about any threat to ACP preferences on the EU market. Taking tuna as an example, Mr Goulongana stated that "some member states believe that consideration should be given to the demands made by Thailand and the Philippines [two countries questioning the preferences granted to ACP countries, arguing that they limit Thai and Philippine exports to the EU] which is contrary to the commitments the EU has made to us. We are trying to persuade the EU not to give in. However, if it cannot withstand these demands, measures will have to be taken to compensate us for our losses". A similar situation concerns Brazil and Australia and the sugar protocol. The Secretary-General is calling on the ACP Group and the EU to unite to protect the preferences granted to the ACP countries.

Also on the agenda are the protracted WTO negotiations and the "about-turn in Geneva, contrary to commitments made in Doha". Mr Goulongana was critical of the equivocation over poor countries' access to generic medicines as borne out by the failure of the mini-Ministerial conference in Tokyo in February 2003. He also spoke out about "the lack of political will on the part of developed countries" to render WTO rules more flexible so as to ensure special and differentiated treatment between rich and developing countries. "Development, recognised as key to this new round of negotiations, does not seem to be a priority for everyone. Individual national interests are taking precedence over commitments to the international agenda, and we are losing sight of development issues. The ACP countries will focus on this matter at the ACP-EU Council of Ministers in May and during preparations for the 5th WTO Ministerial Conference scheduled for September 2003 in Cancun, Mexico."

Cuba also features prominently on the ACP agenda as its accession to the Cotonou Agreement becomes increasingly likely. The ACPs are hoping for a decision as Cuba has made a new, formal application to join the agreement. Cuba's application is to be studied by the ACP-EU Council together with East Timor's. By virtue of its formal application, Cuba has gone from informal to formal observer of ACP-EU negotiations. With so much negotiation on the cards there can be no doubt that dialogue is ongoing between the parties or of the need to reach agreement and present a united front at the WTO negotiations. ■

*Also in the agenda...*

**Dakar hosts the 1st meeting of ACP Ministers of Culture:**

## Cultural policies and creativity industries take centre stage!

There is increasing recognition today of the importance of culture in the development of the ACP countries: this is the subject and the purpose of the 1st meeting of ACP Ministers of Culture, in accordance with the decision taken by the ACP Heads of State and Government. During their meeting in Nadi (Fiji), in July 2002, they also decided to create an ACP Cultural Foundation, and to organise an ACP Festival, which will be held for the first time in the Republic of Haiti in 2004.

The 1st meeting of the ACP Ministers of Culture will be held in Dakar (Senegal) from 18 to 20 June 2003: the ministerial meeting, on 20 June, will be preceded by a meeting of experts on 18 and 19 June.

*ACP Secretariat, Department of Political, Social, Humanitarian and Cultural affairs.*

## Closer cooperation between the OIF and the ACP countries:

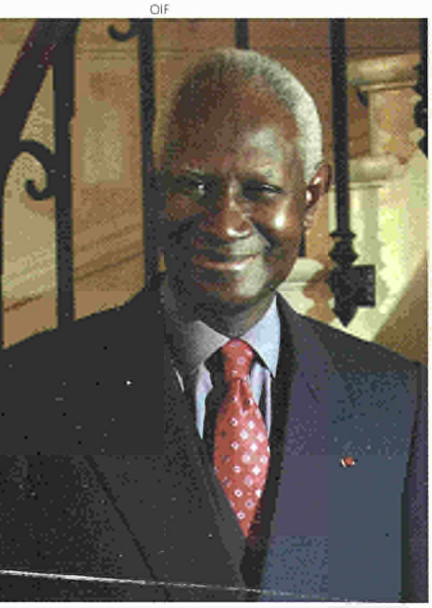
# Abdou Diouf addresses the ACP Committee of Ambassadors

On his first official visit to Belgium, the new Secretary-General of the International Organisation of the Francophonie (OIF), Abdou Diouf, met ambassadors from the group of African, Pacific and Caribbean (ACP) countries in Brussels on 13 March 2003. Appointed to office in October 2002, the former Senegalese president took the opportunity to restate his organisation's various objectives and affirmed his desire to strengthen cooperation with the ACP group.

Kenneth Karl

The OIF was originally created to strengthen links and provide support for lasting cooperation between French-speaking countries. The organisation has evolved over the years, achieving the status of a truly international institution, with the corresponding extension of its scope of activities. Today, its role is to facilitate and monitor respect for the principles and practices of democracy, rights and freedom in French-speaking parts of the world. These principles were set down in writing in the 2000 Bamako Declaration. Now, says the Secretary-General, they will be implemented through an action programme centred around four major priorities:

OIF



- peace, democracy and human rights;
- promotion of the French language;
- basic education, professional and technical training, higher education and research;
- economic and social cooperation in the interests of development.

Mr Diouf also reaffirmed the OIF's intention to protect and promote cultural diversity in the context of globalisation and the negotiations currently underway at the WTO and other bodies on the issue of services. In this regard, the OIF has joined forces with other institutions and is working to get UNESCO to ratify an international convention to promote cultural diversity throughout the world.

### A stronger partnership with the ACP countries

The OIF Secretary-General believes that his organisation and the ACP countries have numerous common interests which they must protect at world level and that the conditions for successful cooperation are already in place. Some thirty countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific are members of both organisations and, moreover, are facing almost identical challenges. The promotion of democracy and human rights, the fight against poverty, education, economic and social development in the context of globalisation and the struggle for better governance are all common themes that can constitute the foundations for joint action. The two institutions have decided to work in a spirit of solidarity. This mutual support should enable them to act together to meet these challenges. Concrete partnerships have already been established between the two organisations in certain specific areas. In trade, a priority for both sides is developing negotiating capacities at multilateral level. A joint programme is underway involving the ACP countries, the OIF and the Commonwealth. Its aim is to support participation by ACP countries in trade negotiations with the European Union and the WTO.

On a political level, the OIF also supported the ACP-EU Joint Assembly's first forum of African parliamentarians in the framework of the NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development), held last October in Cotonou. Mr Diouf aims to increase cooperation between the two parliamentary assemblies in the future.

The OIF has also expressed a desire to be involved in preparations for the first ever meeting of ACP ministers of culture, to be held in Dakar in June 2003. Other issues could also be the subject of joint action by the two institutions – in areas such as energy, promoting peace, financing for development, new technologies, etc.

The two organisations could collaborate in other areas; for instance, the OIF is planning a symposium on improving the access of its least developed members to sources of international development finance. The OIF attaches a particular importance to the international summit on the Information Society (Geneva, December 2003) Mr Diouf invited the ACP Group to be associated with its preparations.

In response to questions from the ACP ambassadors, Mr Diouf emphasised the OIF's work in restoring peace in certain war-torn ACP states. Consultations were held at various levels as regards Côte d'Ivoire, the Central African Republic and other countries. Conflict prevention and management is one of the OIF's priorities in its collaboration with ACP countries and in the assertion of the political role it wishes to play. ■

# Who suffers when a commodity price collapses?

## The coffee crisis – threatening the livelihoods of 25 million coffee producers

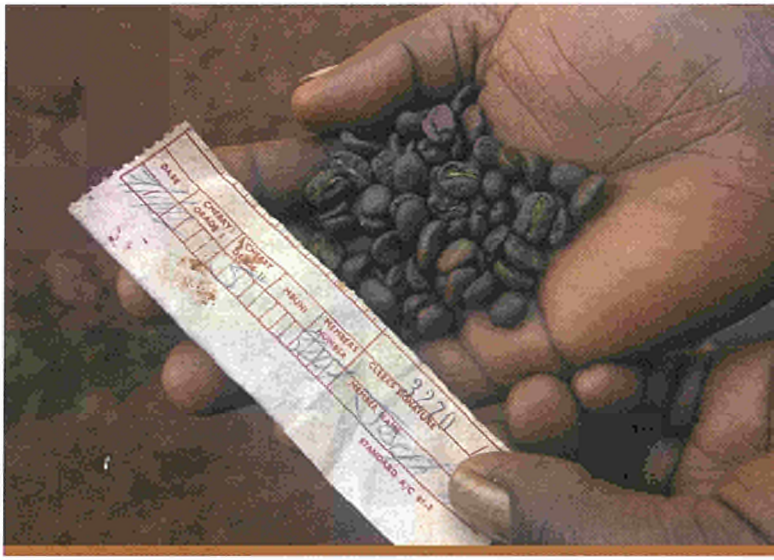
In more than 50 countries around the world, 25 million coffee farmers and their families face deep poverty due to a collapse in world coffee prices. The price of coffee has fallen to a 30-year low and long-term prospects are grim. Developing-country coffee farmers, the majority of whom are poor smallholders, now sell their coffee beans for less than they cost to produce, and producers are being forced off the land and into poverty.

In this article, **Joe Leadbeater*** of Oxfam International – which has just published a report on the coffee crisis – warns that a development disaster is being created whose impacts will be felt for a long time.

Many ACP countries are bearing the brunt of this crisis. Families dependent on the money generated by coffee are having to take their children, especially girls, out of school. They can no longer afford basic medicines, and are cutting back on food.

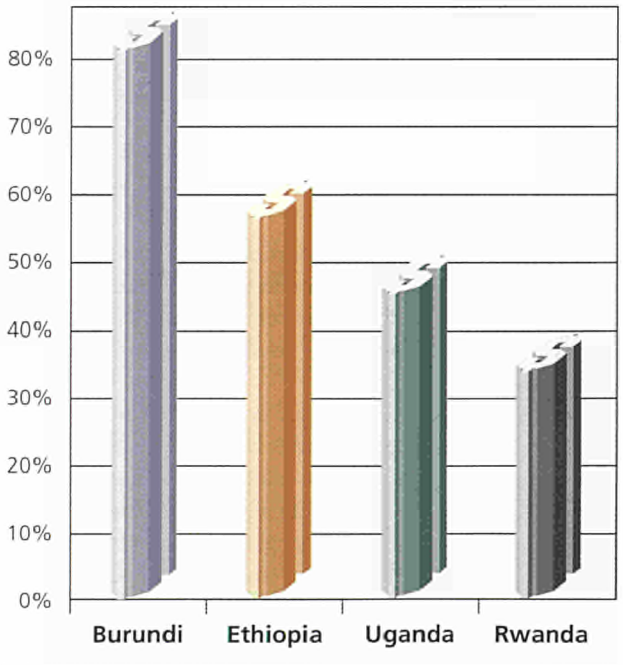
Twenty-seven ACP countries are members of the International Coffee Organisation (ICO) – an intergovernmental body whose members are coffee exporting and importing countries – forming more than half of its exporter-country membership. Of these, 23 are in Africa where coffee is a key export crop.

In Uganda, the livelihoods of roughly one-quarter of the population are dependent on coffee sales. In Ethiopia, 700,000 households depend on coffee for their livelihoods and millions more for part of their income. Coffee accounted for over 50 per cent of Ethiopia's export revenues in 2000, while in Burundi the figure was almost 80 per cent (see figure 1).



Ami Vitale/Oxfam

**Figure 1. Heavy dependence on coffee for cash**
Coffee exports as a % of total exports (2000)



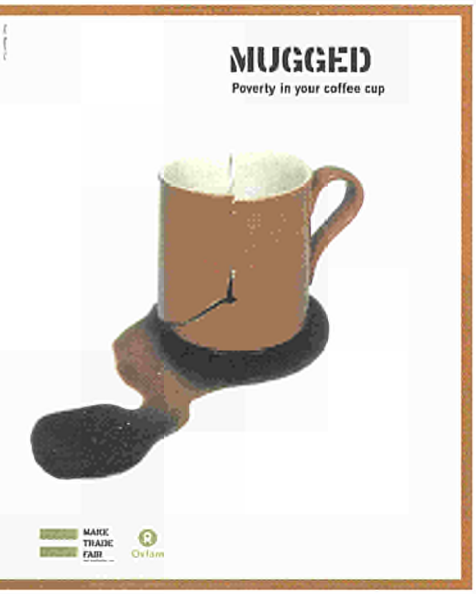

For farmers throughout the developing world, coffee used to hold out hope for a better future.

Smallholder farmers used to reap good benefits from their crop. They could feed their families well, send their children to school and afford decent housing. Now, the situation has dramatically changed. In just six years incomes from coffee have fallen by 65 per cent in many ACP countries.

In January 2002 the EU and USAID warned of increased poverty and food insecurity for coffee farmers in Ethiopia, saying that farmers were selling their assets and cutting down on food. Mohammed Ali Indris, an Ethiopian coffee farmer from Kafa province interviewed by Oxfam in March 2002, gave a graphic description of how the price collapse had affected his family. Around five years ago, he estimates, he could make about $320 a year from the combined sales of coffee and corn. This year he expects around $60 for the coffee. The corn he would have sold has already been eaten by his family.

"Five years ago (1997), I was producing seven sacks of red cherry [unprocessed coffee] and this was enough to buy clothes, medicines, services and to solve so many problems. But now even if I sell four times as much, it is impossible to cover all my expenses. I had to sell my oxen to repay the loan I previously took out to buy fertilisers and improved seed for my corn, or face prison".

The combination of falling coffee incomes, plus rising health demands, is also having a serious impact on health care. In Ethiopia, the fall in coffee export earnings poses serious challenges to the country's ability to deal with the HIV/AIDS crisis. The UN Agency on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) estimates that over three million adult Ethiopians (five per cent of the population) are now infected with the virus. The Ministry of Health has projected that treatment for HIV/AIDS alone will account for over 30 per cent of total health expenditure by 2014.




In Uganda, the crisis is affecting the ability of families to send their children to school. Bruno Selugo (aged 17) and his brother Michael (15), who live in Mpigi District, Uganda, have both had to drop out of school because they cannot afford the fees.

"I can't be successful if I don't go to school," says Bruno. "I will just be left here, growing a little food. I have been sent home again and again from secondary school… they just send you away if you don't have the fees. This is the main coffee season. Everyone used to go back to school with the money from coffee, but now the money is not there".

Beyond farming families, the slump in the coffee price is having a devastating effect on national economies. In just one year, Ethiopia's export revenues from coffee fell 42 per cent from $257m to $149m. The subsequent shortage in government funds puts pressure on education and health, and pushes governments further into debt.

## What has caused the crisis?

Four major factors have led to this crisis:

**1.** The market is severely oversupplied: the volume of coffee produced to be traded far exceeds demand. The gradual build up of excess stocks – 2.4 million tonnes in 2002, almost half of the volume traded internationally each year – keeps coffee prices depressed.

**2.** The value of the coffee market captured by producer countries has dramatically declined. Ten years ago producer-country exports captured one-third of the value of the coffee market. Today, they capture less than ten per cent, even though the market has more than doubled in size. Tiny profit margins in the value chain suddenly widen once the coffee reaches the roasters or retailers, whose margins continually increase.

**3.** The quality of traded coffee beans has deteriorated. Roasters have developed new blending techniques that enable them to use cheaper, lower-grade coffee which would not have been traded a decade ago. The inflow of additional coffee onto the market exacerbates the oversupply problem.

**4.** The lack of compelling alternatives to coffee as a cash crop – partly because of the failure of international aid donors and national governments to promote rural development and diversification, and partly due to the protectionist policies of the EU and US, which have effectively prevented developing-country farmers from benefiting from other commodities. In addition, farmers are often reluctant to abandon coffee production, even after three or four years of unprofitable prices. This is because they have invested their scarce incomes in coffee trees, which take several years to bear fruit but can remain economically active for 25 years.

## How can the EU respond?

*"There is on the question of commodities a sort of conspiracy of silence. The solutions are not simple… But nothing justifies the present indifference."*

President Jacques Chirac of France, 21 February 2003[1]

The EU plays a key role in the coffee market: Member States make up 15 of the 21 importing-country members of the ICO and account for 46 per cent of the world's coffee imports. The EU can spearhead solutions through a combination of existing aid and trade policy instruments. All it needs is the political will.

Oxfam welcomes the recent high-level expressions of concern about the problems facing coffee-dependent countries, and the Council and the European Commission's stated support for the ICO's quality-improvement programme.

There is now an urgent need for action from the EU to assist countries and coffee farmers damaged by the crisis. Unspent EU aid money is available, and Development Commissioner Poul Nielson has promised its reallocation for appropriate purposes. Oxfam believes that addressing the coffee crisis is just such a purpose.

Oxfam has proposed that the EU should:

- Establish a fast track initiative for coffee dependent ACP economies designed to provide an economic stimulus in coffee growing areas; decentralised budget support to coffee growing areas to lessen the effects of the coffee crisis on access to health and education provision; additional budgetary support to ACP central governments commensurate with the budgetary losses flowing form the current coffee crisis.
- Ensure that assistance programmes support trade diversification, provision of market intelligence, the development of co-operatives, better access to credit and agricultural inputs, and a scheme to help farmers make the most of premium coffee-market niches such as Fair Trade, speciality and organic coffee.
- Assist the destruction of low-quality coffee stocks, as a one-off emergency measure to provide an immediate and necessary boost to prices.
- Set up independent monitoring of the quality of coffee that enters the European market, and quickly make the findings public.
- Put pressure on European coffee roasters and traders to adopt ethical codes of conduct for an effective improvement of the working and living conditions on coffee plantations.
- Support poor coffee producers' livelihoods by providing better access to Fair Trade coffee.

Coffee is not the only commodity in crisis. However, the challenge facing the world's coffee market is a sharp illustration of the challenges involving many commodities, such as sugar and cotton, on which developing countries rely heavily. Finding a solution to this crisis is a test of whether globalisation – and the market that it creates – can be made to work for poor people. ■

* Head of EU Advocacy Office, Oxfam International, www.oxfam.org

1. Intervention of M. Jacques Chirac, President of the Republic, on the occasion of the 22nd Conference of Heads of State of Africa and France, concerning agricultural development, p.4. Text released by the French Government, unofficially translated by Oxfam.

# Greater coherence for EU international fisheries agreements

In December 2002, the European Commission approved a Communication[1] aimed at greater coherence between its development and fisheries policies. This came about in response to concerns over its international fishing agreements. The Communication announces a move to partnership agreements in place of purely commercial arrangements.

André Linard/InfoSud

Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau in 2001, Senegal, Angola and Kiribati in 2002: the list of fisheries agreements concluded with the European Union is long. Other agreements are in the pipeline for 2003. From a European perspective, each agreement, ostensibly designed to safeguard common interests, is a chance to stress the benefit to be gained by both parties. This sentiment was echoed by Commissioner Fischler, responsible for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries, following the signing of the protocol with Senegal: "I welcome this new protocol. It will benefit the various parties involved. This deal clearly demonstrates EU commitment to achieving sustainable fisheries and strengthens the coherence between the common fisheries policy and other EU policies".

The use of the word "coherence" often provokes heated debate, as does any mention of the EU-ACP fisheries agreements. Opinions on the subject are conflicting, not only between the EU and external actors but also between various Directorates-General within the Commission.

It should be remembered that it is not only the EU that concludes fishing agreements; developing countries are free to conclude agreements with other countries or multinationals, where the needs of the local communities may not necessarily be taken into account. Pressure on the resource can also come from the national fleet, whether industrial or artisanal. The country itself is responsible for managing the resource, but this is not always the case.

## Vital social considerations

Fisheries agreements come about because of the imbalance between, on the one hand, European demand for fish and the fishing capacity of EU fleets, and, on the other, the diminishing fish stocks in European waters. Europe, like Japan, seems compelled to conclude agreements with third countries, or 'fish for funds' agreements, as they have long been termed. The amount of the funds depends on the terms and conditions; for example the requirement, or not, of offloading the catches at local ports.

The first agreements were signed in 1979 with Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. Now, 15 countries are involved. These agreements had an essentially commercial vocation, to secure access to fish resources for European fleets. However, even within the EU, certain institutions (the Council, the Court of Auditors, for instance) drew attention to the confusing nature of the agreements, related in particular to the nature of the payments, which were not strictly based on the value of the catches, as in the case of a sale, but did not, on the other hand, correspond to development aid for targeted initiatives within the country.

Like water and other resources that for a long time were believed to be available in unlimited supply, fish stocks, severely depleted in the face of increasing demand, are provoking bitter battles over their exploitation. One response, dangerous for the future, would be to fish as much as possible in the short term, especially for young fish, at the risk of jeopardising future replenishment of the species. This would be the direct opposite of sustainable fishing, which is designed to ensure continuity of the species and economic and social sustainability. In Senegal, for example, where over 600,000 people earn their living from small-scale fishing, the industry must also be viewed as a source of employment and income.

For the European Union too, there are important social considerations. Thousands of families depend directly or indirectly on fishing for their livelihoods. Over the last few years European policy has been to restrict fishing capacity by paying fishermen to lay up their boats or to leave them on the quay. In this case too, money is a substitute, this time for activity at sea. Certain regions such as Galicia and Brittany have been particularly hard hit[2].

© Lionel Flageul

Senegalese sailor on a French tuna ship. In EU fishing agreements, a minimum number of local sailors have to be carried on board

The EU's Fisheries Directorate-General (DG), which negotiates the agreements, believes that progress has been made. Stephanos Samaras, head of the unit dealing with bilateral agreements, says: "From a purely commercial approach, we have progressed to partnership agreements, which include access for our fleet to local resources, but also include targeted measures enabling an accurate assessment of available stocks and better control of fishing fleet activities". It should be noted, however, that very often, the countries concerned – which are in charge of their financial compensation – use the available funds for purposes other than those intended.

### Unfair competition

The European attitude to fishing is often accused of inconsistency. With one hand (the Fisheries DG), the Union is taking fish from the nets of local fishermen, small-scale or not, and depriving them of a much needed income. With the other (the Development DG), it is financing activities to support those very same individuals. Stephanos Samaras points out, however, that "one of the chief criteria is that the agreements do not impinge on small coastal fisheries. EU fleets systematically steer clear of zones where such fishing takes place".

But the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Agreements (CAPE) cites numerous instances of European vessels fishing very close to the shore, destroying nets or, in extreme cases, even colliding with the pirogues of local fishermen.

## Fisheries agreement with Kiribati: the first in the Pacific region

In July 2002, a fisheries agreement was signed with the Republic of Kiribati. It gives European vessels the opportunity to fish exclusively for tuna in return for a compensation payment of €1,378 million over three years. These funds, says the press release by Commissioner Fischler, will be used to "finance targeted measures to strengthen Kiribati's participation in regional and international fisheries organisations and to support the country's institutional capacity" in the fisheries area.

The agreement is a prime example of mutual interests shared by parties to an agreement. According to the 2002-2007 Pacific/EU regional strategy document, the local fleet can currently only guarantee 11 per cent of these catches. The infrastructure and human resources are weak and knowledge of marketing networks is desperately lacking. "This fisheries agreement is probably the best way of creating as much added value as possible, given the size of the investments necessary if the country decides to fish and transform the resource", says Jacques Prade. Under the agreement, European ships will have to carry at least two local sailors and offload their catches at least three times a year in a local port.

The European Union obviously also benefits from the agreement. The ACP countries in the Pacific are in the biggest tuna region in the world, a potential that is largely unexploited. According to FAO statistics, less than 50 per cent of the total catches allowable to ensure sustainable exploitation are currently taking place, whereas virtually the whole of Africa is approaching saturation point. A number of safeguards have been implemented to avoid overfishing, such as satellite surveillance, the presence of observers on selected vessels and an obligation to declare catches. Where such measures already exist, they are often ineffective.

In 2001, the Eurostep NGO committee declared that "certain aspects of the Common Fisheries Policy are flagrantly incoherent with EU development policy objectives[3]". Drawing attention to the "competition between European fleets and local small-scale fisheries over access to resources, threatening coastal communities in developing countries," the NGO points out the various subsidies awarded to European fisheries which result in "unfair competition between fish products from European fleets and products from developing country fleets that are not subsidised."

### A more explicit Communication

Prompted by these criticisms, the Commission decided to look into the issue. In December 2002 it submitted a Communication to the Council "on an integrated framework for fisheries partnership agreements with third countries". The term 'partnership' recurs throughout. According to Jacques Prade, fisheries advisor to DG Development, "this is a very positive sign for the development of the countries concerned. In particular, it rules out fisheries agreements granting access to already overexploited waters".

The Communication could pave the way for a whole new level of coherence. Fisheries agreements have been renamed fisheries partnership agreements and emphasis is placed on the sustainability of fisheries. But everything will depend on its implementation. Though it proposes that "fisheries bilateral relations gradually move from access agreements to partnership agreements", the text itself states that "the Community should first of all defend the legitimate objectives of its fishing industry".

In June 2002, CAPE declared that "the proposal to transform the fisheries agreements into 'partnerships' with developing countries has a number of very positive aspects (more accurate evaluation of stocks by regional initiatives or the FAO, more public involvement, etc.); nevertheless, there is a very real danger that the EU's undertaking to 'help the developing countries define a sustainable fisheries policy' is largely subordinate to the objective of providing fishing opportunities for the EU fleet. In certain cases, where stocks are overexploited, in Mauritania and Senegal in West Africa, for example, these so-called 'partnership agreements' would mean small-scale local fisheries losing out to European fleets searching out new areas to fish".

The Communication proposes a reorientation towards greater respect for the continuity of resources and coherence with development objectives. It states that "consistency of the European external activities must be ensured".

On a more general note, one might wonder whether the EU's approach to fisheries agreements is viable in the long term. The countries in the South are increasingly able to manage their fish resources themselves. This enables them to increase their charges to European vessels for access to their resources, becoming more and more competitive themselves. In the long term, Europe will no doubt be required to develop a precise strategy with respect to the types of fish resources to which it will require access for its boats and those for which it must instead concentrate on transformation or marketing strategies. These aspects are not broached in the Communication. ■

1. Communication from the Commission on an integrated framework for fisheries partnership agreements with third countries (COM (2002) 637 final 23.12.2002
2. See, among other sources, the *Pêche et Développement* review, Lorient - France.
3. Eurostep, *Dans les filets de la cohérence entre pêche et développement*, May 2001, p. 19.
4. ADE: *Evaluation of the Relationship between Country Programmes and Fisheries Agreements*, Final Report, 21 November 2002. Financed by the EU, this evaluation is an official document.

# Increasing demand for education in Chad

Girls at Fari, Guera. More than two years of primary school is extremely rare for girls (and rare for boys)

More Standard Arabic in modern classrooms would help to end mistrust among Islamic parents in Chad of modern education. But the government of Chad is also determined that teaching in Arabic should not be confused with teaching Islam, and does what it can to keep fundamentalism at bay.

Dorrit van Dalen

In Chad, the idea of "Le refus de l'école" (the refusal to be educated) needs no introduction. It refers to a time when large groups of people in the Islamic north of the country kept their children away from the schools that were run by the colonial and Christian French. The French administration has left but the education system has remained. It functions rather well in the south of the country and still uses the French language. But less than 50 per cent of Chad's children (according to a recent NGO study) attend school. The attendance rate among Islamic children is much lower than this national average. Their parents are afraid that once in school they will forget about the Koran.

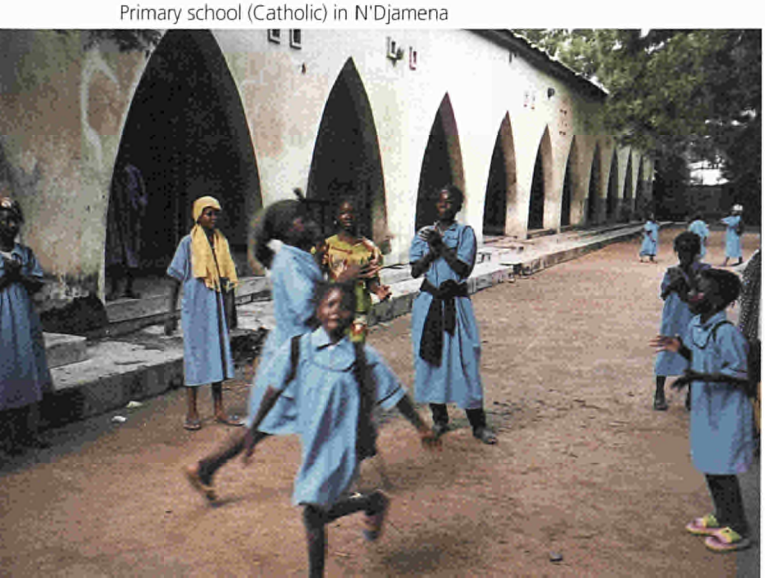
Policy makers are anxious about this ever deepening divide between educated and uneducated citizens. This divide is only one of an accumulation of fault lines Chad is witnessing: between the north and the south, between Islam and Christianity, pastoralist and agricultural territories, between the power of the gun and the power of knowledge.

Education in (Standard) Arabic would help to end the mistrust among Islamic parents. It appears to be bearing fruit: ever since the plan became public knowledge, the Ministry of Education has been mildly overwhelmed by requests for an "ustas" – an Arabic-speaking teacher. Teaching in Arabic is also consistent with one of the two articles from the 1996 Constitution that are most frequently quoted. It says: "Chad is bilingual", which means that,apart from French, Standard Arabic is the other official language of the country.

It is remarkable how many parents have decided to put their eggs in two educational baskets. Take Limane Mahamat. He has a good job as a bookkeeper and sends all his six children to school. Three attend an ordinary secondary school where the language of instruction is French; the other three go to a private secondary school where the language is Arabic. The only subjects taught in French in this school are arithmetic and natural science. The rest, including general Islamic education and readings from the Koran, is taught in Arabic.

There is something odd about these official languages. Neither of the two are spoken by many; fewer still read or write them. French is spoken by roughly a quarter of the population and only eight per cent can read it. Still, this is the language of the administration. There are well over one hundred other languages that people use every day and one of them is Chadian Arabic. This language is spoken by more than half the population. It is a dialect with a passing resemblance to the Moroccan version of Arabic but it is unintelligible to those who speak Standard or "Literary" Arabic,

Primary school (Catholic) in N'Djamena



Koranic school

which is the language the Arab world has adopted for purposes of international relations. All newspapers are written in this language and it is the national language in for instance Egypt. This is the Standard Arabic that has been elevated to the status of national language in Chad, even though only two per cent of the people read or write it.

Nothing much has changed as a result of this move. All government reports and announcements are still in French. It would not be very practical – not to mention prohibitively expensive – to translate everything into Arabic. This begs the question why Chadian Arabic was not made the national language. "Because it is not linguistically pure. It cannot be written in the Arabic script and it would not be acceptable to transcribe the language using the Latin alphabet," say conservatives with strong links to the religious top. "Because for many things and concepts, from `flower' to 'decentralisation', the Chadian dialect has no word," says Kodi Mahamat, a respected historian and Director General at the Ministry of Education.

Nevertheless, the street scenes in the larger cities are changing. Arabic letters adorn billboards and the signs that indicate institutions and corporations. What is driving this process is not government policy; it is money. Example: an official in the Ministry of Education reports to Kodi Mahamat. He is carrying a card from a Saudi bank. Could Kodi please explain what it says? It turns out to be an invitation to attend the presentation of a new fund for development projects. This illustrates the point neatly: Chad is poor and Arab governments and Islamic aid organisations are dishing out large sums of money for roads, water, education and charity. There are also trade opportunities. It is worth your while to learn their language.

Chad has more or less rid itself of France and the Gulf region is only too happy to step in, because very soon there will be something on offer – when the oil production comes on stream. The Islamic Development Bank is currently spending millions of dollars on Arabic educational material, training Arabic language teachers and building classrooms in two northern prefectures.

Modern education must become acceptable to Islamic citizens and the quality of education in the Arabic language must be improved. At present, there are thousands of small Koran schools where children only learn to copy the holy book, not how to read or write in Arabic. There are also the schools known as madrassas, where language, grammar, religion and some arithmetic are being taught. Finally, French-Arabic neighbourhood schools have sprung up, where education in Arabic is offered, leading to the public 'baccalaureat' (secondary school diploma). The teachers who work in the madrassas and the French-Arabic schools are mostly boys who have been 'adventuring' in the Sudan for a few years. When bilingualism started to be promoted in Chad, they returned. They are fluent in Arabic and strict adherents of Islam but they lack didactic qualities and their range of subjects is usually limited to language, history and general Islamic education. In principle, the exams are the same as the ones that are done in French but in practice the questions are tampered with, especially in the area of the sciences.

Ministry of Education, a nine-storey building without elevator. In the hottest months (50°C) tea is served halfway up the stairs.

**Chad has a population of 7.7 million, about 3 million of whom are of school-going age. About 1.2 million actually attended school in 1999/2000.* A third of them are girls. The private institutions (mostly Catholic or Islamic) attract more girls than do other schools. These are typically established in the large cities N'Djamena, Moundou and Abeche.**

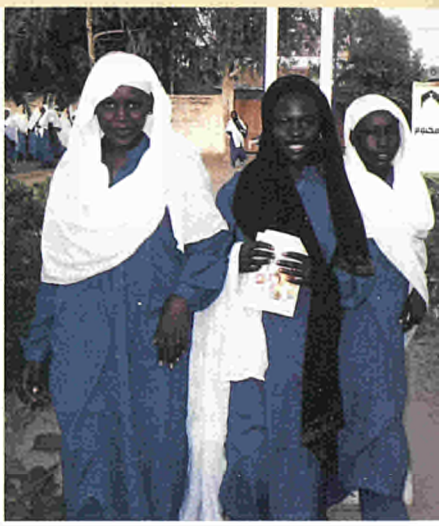
**The enthusiasm for schooling is increasing rapidly, faster than many schools can cope with. In public schools there are school desks and seats for only 23% of the pupils. Even private schools have seats for only 48% of their pupils.**

**Most children who go to school do so between the age of seven and eleven. After that age many children start to drop out. In 2000 that meant that only 4.7% of all the students who left school, had obtained a diploma.**

**94,5% of the schools in Chad teach in French, 3% teach in Arabic and 2,5% in both languages.**

**Chad has two universities, the University of N'Djamena which offers especially humanities and some science to over 2,000 students and the King Faycal University which excels in physical sciences and has about 150 students.**

** Statistical data are from the German Cooperation Organisation GTZ.*



Kodi Mahamat, Director General at the Ministry of Education.
Above: Yakoura and friends at the private school Ibnou Cina.

In Chad the ninth EDF, which will start in 2003 comprises two major sectors: infrastructures (roads and water) and budgetary support, oriented to the social sectors, with a budget of €50 million. Most of that will be spent on health and on education.
In 2000 the Ministry of Education had a budget of 19 milliard Fcfa (about €29 million) representing 2,28% of the Gross National Product and 19,1% of the entire state budget. Funds reserved for education have increased significantly over the last five year. "But that does not mean that the money reaches education structures without any problems", says European Union officer Bernard François. François is preparing a programme to provide support for the institutional development of the Ministry of Education. "Education is a very high priority in Chad. The demand is very strong. Now that the first phase of the exploitation of the oil in Chad's soil has started, the need for better and more education has become more clear than ever. The companies that are constructing roads and other sorts of infrastructure have the greatest trouble finding skilled Chadian personnel. Reinforcing the capacity of the entire education sector is very urgent." The EU, together with several national authorities in Chad, has chosen to help the Ministry of Education in a general way to carry out its policies, by setting up a unit of Chadian and expatriate experts in financial management and planning.

N'Djamena centre

Fifteen-year old Yakoura has chosen the private school Ibnou Cina (subsidised through the Middle Eastern NGO Dadawa Islamiya) herself. Boys and girls are in separate classrooms. Girls are dressed in long trousers and long-sleeved shirts. When school ends in the afternoon they are only allowed out when there is a relative to fetch them. "Some are complaining that we are being locked up. But I'm concerned about a good education and safety," Yakoura says. "We are taught not to talk too much or to argue, and that you shouldn't make henna drawings on your hands until you're married. And in our school the boys don't harass us and they're not allowed to carry knives." That is indeed an achievement. All public schools in the cities witness fights between boys using knives and guns. Most fights start over a place to sit in the classrooms where a hundred and twenty try to squeeze into seats for thirty. Girls feel permanently intimidated. In the madrassas and the French-Arabic schools, which are supervised by an imam, there is (still) enough space and boys are regularly checked and sent away if they carry a knife. These are the only schools that attract far more girls than boys, which in itself is a plea for this type of education.

But non-Muslims feel uncomfortable. It is a fact that the policy to stimulate Arabic coincides with the increasing influence of all varieties of Islam, including the fundamentalist one, over the past four or five years. Paradoxically, that is partly a result of the translations into French of parts of the Koran and other religious texts, produced in countries like Senegal and Morocco, and now available in Chad. "Thanks to those brochures and cassettes, I now understand the prayers and the rituals, and I am much more serious about my religion," says a female civil servant. For the first time in decades, the mosques are filling up with young men, more and more men are refusing to shake hands with a woman, and one of the capital N'Djamena's major arteries effectively closes every Friday to enable a large group of people to use hundreds of metres of that street for the purpose of joint prayer.

Few Christians in Chad believe that the objective of introducing Standard Arabic is educational reform. They are very frightened about increased polarisation between various parts of the population in a country that has known 30 years of civil war since its independence – much of which has been to the disadvantage of the Christian south during the last 20 years. As far as they are concerned, Standard Arabic is the language of Islam, similar to Koran-Arabic (a dead language). "Turn it off," they say, when there is Standard Arabic on the radio, "they are going to pray." They also keep fearfully repeating the second most frequently quoted phrase from the Constitution: "Le Tchad est un pays laïque" (Chad is a lay country), lest we forget.

Is this not a bit exaggerated, this fear for the advancing language and the supposed link with an ascending Islam? Abbas Mahamat of ISESCO, the Islamic Unesco says: "It makes me smile. 50 years ago we were afraid of Christian indoctrination through French education. Now the reverse is the case. Of course, language and culture are linked. But the objective is not to teach Islam".

However, the average Islamic person does identify Standard Arabic entirely with his or her faith. They would find it, for instance, impossible to imagine having Arabic broadcasts coming from Vatican Radio. Also, as a result of the dearth in educational material, the texts that are frequently used in the Arabic lessons are passages from the Koran and the Hadith.

The version of Islam that is holding sway in Chad is actually much more down-to-earth than the strict interpretations obtaining in neighbouring countries like Libya and Sudan. Still, the possibility that Standard Arabic becomes the means of transport for their brand of Islam is something that Kodi Mahamat, himself a Muslim, takes seriously. "The problem with this Arabic education is that, without always meaning to, it promotes fundamentalism. All these women you see walking around the streets these days, dressed in black – those are ordinary local women. But we have no control. For years, the government has not been able to do a great deal for education and funds like Dadawa Islamiya and countries like Libya are filling the gap." ■

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# Food security

In a world of increasing prosperity and plentiful food supplies, about 840 million people still suffer from hunger and malnutrition. Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life

The World Food Summit in 1996 set the goal of reducing the number of hungry people in the world by half before the year 2015. Four years later, that goal was repeated in the first of the Millennium Development Goals, which set targets of reducing by half both the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and the proportion living on less than US$1 per day.

There has been some progress in reducing the absolute number of hungry people, but this is not happening fast enough to achieve the World Food Summit target. Recent estimates from the FAO's "State of Food Security 2002" put the number of undernourished people in the world at 840 million, of whom 799 million live in developing countries.

Sub-Saharan Africa continues to have the highest prevalence of undernourishment and the biggest increase in the number of undernourished people. Currently southern and eastern Africa are facing food shortages. The situation, however, is not uniformly grim on the continent, and many countries have made progress in reducing the prevalence and number of undernourished people.

But famine is not simply a question of food availability, occurring also in countries where there is plenty of food. Hunger is to a large extent an outcome of poverty, and food insecurity is not so much a problem of production or availability, but also of access to food and faltering development. The majority of the hungry in the world are rural poor, landless and with limited access to resources, poorly educated, often living in conflict situations. The poor must have economic access to food through opportunities to earn adequate incomes. In addition, food must be available, either from domestic production or from imports.

Work on food security has contributed important insights, and **Simon Maxwell** and **Rachel Slater**'s article looks at evolving food security policy. No area of the current debate on governance has had such a low profile as food security, asserts **M.A. Mohamed Salih**: a proactive regime of food security governance would contribute significantly to reshaping national food policies and transforming them into food security policies. **Chris Tapscott** analyses whether better forecasting is the answer to better food security. **Gerhard Schmalbruch** looks at the "grey zone" between emergency relief and long term development. The relationship between HIV/AIDS and food security is complex and of the greatest importance, says **Tony Barnett**, and the epidemic is a central factor in the current food crisis in southern Africa. **Jean Bakole** looks at policies which have an impact on food security in Africa, such as inequitable access to land, conflict and trade liberalisation.

Two articles – an interview with **Stefan Tangermann** of the OECD and an article by **John Madeley** – explore the links between food production, poverty and global trade. Better exploitation of the links between agriculture and food security could help achieve the goals of the World Food Summit, says **Joachim von Braun**.

As for the European Union, **Poul Nielson** talks about the EU's food security policies and the lessons learned from the current crisis. **Claire Barrault** from the EU's delegation in Malawi looks at how a country facing famine can put in place mechanisms to prevent recurrence of such a situation. **Gerasimos Apostolatos** describes an EU programme supporting scientific research on aspects of food security in developing countries.

**Carl Greenidge** explains the CTA's (Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation – an institution set up under Lomé) strategies in food security.

# Food policy: old and new

Food security as an idea has been a powerful driver of policy for more than two decades. Indeed, the European Community was one of the first to see the potential value. In 1981, the EC launched a Plan of Action to Combat Hunger in the World. Very soon after, it famously became involved in preparing pilot food security plans in four African countries Kenya, Mali, Rwanda and Zambia. The topic has remained at the heart of European development policy since that time. Food security features prominently in the new EU Development Policy approved in 2000, and is certainly on the agenda today, as a result of the food crisis in Southern Africa and the Horn.

**Simon Maxwell and Rachel Slater**[1]



Work on food security – and not just in Africa – has contributed important insights. It has reminded policy makers that the problems of hunger and malnutrition cannot be solved simply by producing more food. Rather, food security is achieved when the individuals concerned have secure and sustainable access to the food they need for healthy, active lives. Sometimes more food is needed. But sometimes, the priority is to provide income-earning opportunities or safety nets which enable poor people to acquire the food that already exists, or mechanisms to help countries and households cope with the impact of drought on supply and price. Often, of course, it is necessary both to produce more food and to strengthen safety nets and anti-poverty programmes.

Debate about the current famine in Africa illustrates how far understanding has improved. Perhaps thirty million people face starvation at present, in a crisis greatly exacerbated by the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. More food is indeed needed. But attention is not just focused on the failure of food supply. There are also active debates about measuring vulnerability, about the design of safety nets and social protection, and about underlying issues to do with the liberalisation of agricultural markets and the crisis of rural development. There is also a debate about governance and the effectiveness of policy-making. In Southern Africa, especially, a food crisis on this scale should never have been allowed to develop. To paraphrase British prime minister Tony Blair (who observed in a much-quoted speech that we should be 'tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime'), we should be 'tough on hunger, tough on the causes of hunger'.

## A new food policy to match new needs

Famine, however, even chronic hunger, forms only part of the food agenda. The fact is that developing countries are changing, and that their food systems are changing, too. In general, developing countries are more urbanised than they were twenty years ago, more open to trade, more industrialised, in some cases richer, in many cases more unequal. The food sector is changing as a result. It is more integrated, more industrialised, in some cases more concentrated. These changes demand a new food policy.

Over 40 per cent of the population of developing countries already lives in urban areas; by 2020, more than half will do so. In West Africa, there will be over thirty cities of one million people by 2020. In India, the urban population will increase by 300 million. Food habits in both rural and urban areas change rapidly as urbanisation takes place. A higher share of food consumption tends to be outside the home, for example, in restaurants or roadside stalls. And in the home, there is preference for convenience foods: pre-prepared tortillas in Central America, or a shift in West Africa from labour-intensive sorghum products to wheat and rice.

## Food systems

The growth of supermarkets is associated with urbanisation. In rich countries, supermarkets have come to dominate food retailing, and the same is now happening in the developing world. In Central and Latin America, for example, supermarkets already control 60 per cent of all food retailing, with the sector showing a high degree of concentration and 'multinationalisation', and with small farmers finding it hard to participate in new supply chains. Supermarkets are often presented as offering consumers greater choice, higher quality control, and lower price, though these claims are also disputed. What is not disputed is that they make demands on suppliers that some find hard to meet, for example with respect to volume, timeliness, and quality standards. Nor are the suppliers simply local: supermarkets source globally, and the new food chains extend over thousands of miles.

The new food industry is founded in agriculture, of course, but has grown and diversified in many other sectors, including packaging, transport and distribution, and food manufacturing. As a result, certainly in the developed world, the number of workers in agriculture

**The problems of hunger and malnutrition cannot be solved simply by producing more food. Rather, food security is achieved when the individuals concerned have secure and sustainable access to the food they need for healthy, active lives.**

has declined but the number of people working in the food system has not. In the UK, for example, only 10 per cent of workers in the food sector are employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing, whilst the remaining jobs are found in food manufacturing, retail and catering. In the developing world, the proportion of people working in the food system outside agriculture is smaller, but is growing

Finally, the nature of the nutrition problem is also changing. Traditionally, food policy has been concerned mainly with under-nutrition, particularly among children and other vulnerable groups. However, obesity and other chronic dietary diseases (for example diabetes) are emerging as significant public health problems in developing countries. In Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, obesity has reached levels as high as those in the US – and is often a marker of poverty, associated with poor quality diet. It is associated with rapidly rising levels of diabetes and heart disease. By 1990, heart disease had become the leading cause of death worldwide, with 64 per cent of deaths taking place in developing countries.

As a result of these changes, food policy needs a new focus: more emphasis on the industrial structure of the food industry, more on supply and value chains, more on food safety, more on chronic dietary diseases. This is not so much a new food security agenda (centred on concerns about supply, variability and access), as an evolving and more diverse food policy agenda. It can be summarised in the table below, which illustrates different dimensions of the old and new food policy. This is, of course, no more than a heuristic device. Few countries will conform exactly to the 'old' or 'new' characterisations: most are in between, but most are also moving along a continuum from old to new.

Does this matter? We think it does. There are new issues on the table here about the efficiency and equity of the global food system, and these issues demand new kinds of analysis. For example, there is a need to understand who gains and who loses along the extended value chain which leads from the farmer in one country to the supermarket customer in another. Industrial specialists know about this, and there are parallels with the study of furniture and other manufactured goods. Similarly, many food safety issues arise in the new, integrated food systems: the regulation issues are familiar from other sectors. The new health issues are another example: food-related illness can no longer be separated out as the concern of a small, and usually under-funded, unit in the Ministry of Health: the increase in heart disease and diabetes goes to the heart of national and international health policy.

A new food policy agenda draws in new actors. The emphasis has been on vulnerability, on early warning, on food supply, on food-based safety nets, and on targeted nutrition interventions. It is not surprising, therefore, that the key international actors have been the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the World Food Programme, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, and the nutritionists at the World Health Organisation. As the agenda changes, new actors will need to play a part, concerned with industrial development, labour standards, education, and regulation. Food security, in a sense, becomes too important to be left to food security specialists.

A final, heretical thought. Is it time to stop worrying so much about food security and start worrying more about food policy? ■

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The issues raised here will be explored further in a special issue of the journal *Development Policy Review*, to be published in September 2003.

## Food Policy Old and New

| | | Food Policy 'Old' | Food Policy 'New' |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Population | Mostly rural | Mostly urban |
| 2 | Rural jobs | Mostly agricultural | Mostly non-agricultural |
| 3 | Employment in the food sector | Mostly in food production and primary marketing | Mostly in food manufacturing and retail |
| 4 | Actors in food marketing | Grain traders | Food companies |
| 5 | Supply chains | Short-small number of food miles | Long-large number of food miles |
| 6 | Typical food preparation | Mostly food cooked at home | High proportion of pre-prepared meals, food eaten out |
| 7 | Typical food | Basic staples, unbranded | Processed food, branded |
| 8 | Packaging | Low | High |
| 9 | Purchased food bought in | Local stalls or shops, open markets | Supermarkets |
| 10 | Food safety issues | Pesticide poisoning of field workers<br>Toxins associated with poor storage | Pesticide residues in food<br>Adulteration<br>Bio-safety issues in processed foods (salmonella, listeriosis) |
| 11 | Nutrition problems | Under-nutrition | Chronic dietary diseases (obesity, heart disease, diabetes) |
| 12 | Nutrient issues | Micronutrients | Fat<br>Sugar |
| 13 | Food insecure | 'Peasants' | Urban and rural poor |
| 14 | Main sources of national food shocks | Poor rainfall and other production shocks | International price and other trade problems |
| 15 | Main sources of household food shocks | Poor rainfall and other production shocks | Income shocks causing food poverty |
| 16 | Remedies for household food shortage | Safety nets, food-based relief | Social protection, income transfers |
| 17 | Fora for food policy | Ministries of agriculture, relief/rehabilitation, health | Ministries of trade and industry, consumer affairs |
| 18 | Focus of food policy | Agricultural technology, parastatal reform, supplementary feeding, food for work | Rent-seeking in the value chain, industrial structure in the retail sector, futures markets, waste management, advertising, health education. |
| 19 | Key international institutions | FAO, WFP, UNICEF, WHO, CGIAR | FAO, UNIDO, ILO, WHO, WTO |

# Food security governance: implications for the ACP countries

The current food governance regime is dominated by global structures far removed from the daily struggles of the hungry. Even the emergent global civil society and advocacy groups have a limited influence on global food policies.
In this article **M.A. Mohamed Salih**[1] argues that a proactive regime of food security governance operating at the national and local levels, under democratic conditions, will contribute significantly to reshaping national food policies and transforming them into food security policies. The governors should be held responsible to the governed in this important area of public policy.

No area of the current debate on governance has had such a low profile as food security. This cannot be explained because of irrelevance or lack of genuine interest in the significance of governance to food security. It certainly cannot be explained on the grounds that a "good governance" regime in food security already exists. It clearly does not.

## Human security versus national security

Three plausible interpretations could be put forward as to why food security governance remains on the back seat of the debate, although global food governance institutions do exist. First, it can be explained in relation to two competing definitions of security: human security and national security. For most of the post-Second World War period, particularly during the Cold War, security was predominantly defined as national security.

Military security was the dominant concern of national security, with its evident economic and political connotations. Cold War architects considered national security the defining element of national sovereignty. Concerns with military expenditure predominated over concerns with human security – defined as "a condition of existence in which basic human needs are met and in which human dignity, including meaningful participation in the life of community, can be realised. At the most basic level, food, shelter, education, and health care are essential for the survival of human beings".[2]

So food security is essentially part of human security and as such demands a redefinition of the concept of security. This conceptualisation was absent during the Cold War, when the heightened ideological divisions between Western and Eastern blocs in many instances sacrificed human security to achieve national security objectives.

## New forms of polarisation

Secondly, it was expected that with the end of the Cold War the emphasis would shift from military to human security. The triumph of multilateralism has contributed to a new and emerging global governance regime, and it was expected that this would foster a new "humanitarian" understanding and therefore make it possible for humanity to reap the positive outcomes of the democratic peace dividend. Sadly, this has not been the case.

Indeed, in some parts of the world, particularly war-torn and famine-stricken countries, the end of the bipolar Cold War has instead "produced new forms of polarisation (ethnic, religious, economic, regional etc.) that have undermined state and societal security alike".[3]

## Competition versus cooperation

Thirdly, food security governance should entail the accountability of the governors to the governed through binding commitments that most developing countries are probably fearful of subscribing to. The current global mindset is premised on food trade and competitiveness. So commitments to ensuring the food security of potential competitors could deter the largest food producing and exporting countries from making concessions in the areas of subsidies and market access to developing countries.

While large food exporting countries and regional entities supply food in complex emergencies – for famine relief and disaster prevention – they are less keen to support long-term food security, including such global visions as food-for-all and a hunger-free world. In short, there are serious food security governance issues at the national, regional and global levels, so we must look more closely into the linkages between these and the general debate on governance.

## Linkages

Food security commonly refers to "access by all at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life, including availability and the ability to acquire it". This cannot be ensured by subsuming it under economic governance – it is a domain of governance in its own right. All four aspects of food security (availability, access, stability and quality) are matters for a governance regime based on food as an indispensable part of the support system for human life. In this respect food security encompasses more than the economies of food production, consumption, distribution and marketing. As such food security cannot be guaranteed through economic governance institutions alone or through policy reforms dealing merely with economic regulatory frameworks and instruments.

In the domain of food security, governance is part of a broader context, linking the physical environment as well as the socio-economic and political aspects of society. This in

turn is linked to a global governance regime that has designed policies to respond to global food insecurity. These include buffer stock systems, food price stabilisation programmes, food aid, financial food facility schemes, trade policies and food imports.

Although national and global food security policies are important for fostering food security, these are often influenced by other non-food policies such as marketing, trade regimes and transport. Taken on their own they cannot solve problems associated with food entitlement. Obviously, food policies devoid of real concerns with food security have provided poor answers to urgent and critical food needs. Not only have these policies failed to solve food crises, they have miserably failed to ensure long-term food security.

One fallacy associated with the current regime of food governance is that global food security is an aggregate of national food policies designed under the assumption that food self-sufficiency would automatically ensure food security. This is evidently not the case. It is near impossible to translate food self-sufficiency into food security without a proper agricultural infrastructure, without credit and extension schemes and without public food distribution policies.

The next question is what are the main characteristics of food security governance and how could it contribute to the national and global public policy governance debate.

## Food security and democracy

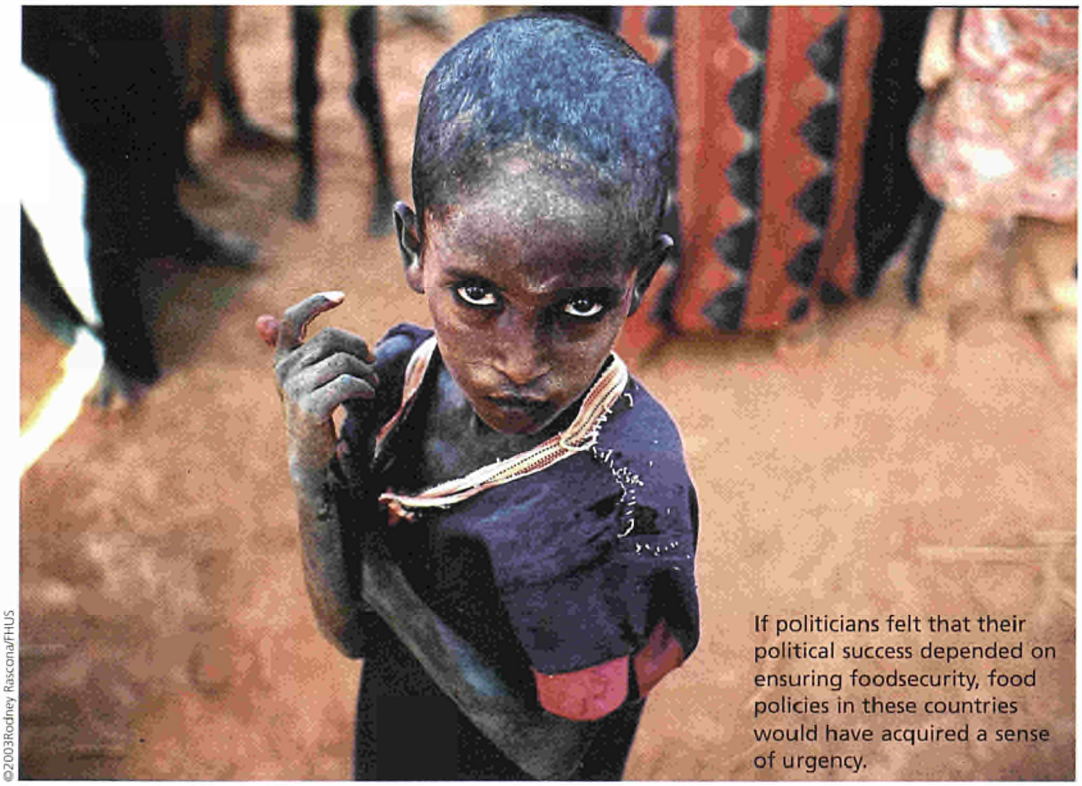
The governance of food security involves many stakeholders – it encompasses both government and society. The significance of multi-stakeholder governance stems from its ability to combine the efforts of all concerned with food security. It includes government, farmers, environmentalists, the social justice lobby, human rights groups, the "right to food" activists, food technology producers, and exporters.

The political dimension of food security governance is particularly important because it is only in a democracy that such a regime could be put to practice. This means that for any government to be legitimate, its authority (the legitimate exercise of power) should derive from periodic and regular free, fair contested elections with inclusive participation.

Popular sovereignty is exercised and expressed in the daily practice of political and human rights, guaranteed under constitutional and legal arrangements to restrain the holders of power and to protect those who could be subject to their whim. The holders of political power are held accountable not only to parliament and the state's regulatory institutions but also to the people. The executive branch is also held accountable by law through an independent judiciary and other legal and regulatory frameworks.

It is clear that only in democracies are food policies freely negotiated and binding policies conceived, targets set and implemented, and reviewed in order to gauge compliance with the government's commitments. When governance reflects public preferences it is likely that food will be at the top of the list of priorities. So institutional governance should be about understanding political institutions and making them work effectively. Those negatively affected by food policies should be able to use the institutions of governance to hold the government responsible. It is essential that citizens are able to question the record of governments that allow food shortages and famine to ravage their country.

In common with the dominant debate on economic and political governance, food security governance is also about "institutional governance building and supporting cultures of rights and rules that make possible the agreements represented in coalition and common understandings."[5] A culture of rights and rules, common understandings and agreements, is as important for the governance of food security as for fostering a polity based on democratic cultures and values. One cannot ensure one without the other.



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If politicians felt that their political success depended on ensuring foodsecurity, food policies in these countries would have acquired a sense of urgency.

So proactive food security governance can be summarised as follows:

- exerting pressure on government and others involved in food security policies;
- maintaining accountability and oversight to ensure compliance with commitments made;
- taking corrective measures when policy targets are not met within a specific time frame; and
- establishing an administrative regulatory framework to improve food availability, access and quality.

A food governance regime needs to ensure the active participation of each layer in this multi-stakeholder approach, otherwise food policies cannot be put into effect. Of course it is naïve to think that there are no vested interests or power structures informing the relationship between the diverse stakeholders. But the fact that an institutional framework has been created for self-government as well as for negotiating interests is an important step towards breaking the monopoly over critical issues such as national and global food policies.

## Harnessing change

The globalisation of food, the exponential development in food technology from biotechnology to genetic modification, and the global competition for farm animal and plant genetic resources carry with them immense risks and potential opportunities. They have the potential to transform what is meant by food security for subsistence producers and indigenous peoples. At the same time it cannot and should not be left to the monopoly of individual states or corporate whim to maintain a minimum standards of sustenance.

Naturally the current regime of governance for global food security[6] addresses some of the current concerns. However, its direct contribution to alleviating food insecurity for the majority of the world's population is questionable. The gap in perception between global, national and household food security governance is too great to be bridged by global conventions and treaties alone. It is also doubtful whether the current regime satisfies the requirements for global food security governance set out above.

The governance of global food security could, however, be hugely aided by democratic governance that is responsive to the immediate concerns of citizens. As voters they can influence policies and priorities and can commit public policy to food security targets. So the relationship between democracy and the quest for transparency, accountability and public participation cannot be isolated from the debate about food security and its opposite, food insecurity, shortages and famine.

## An Afro-Caribbean perspective

Although the issues surrounding food security governance are universal, they have a particular relevance to African and Caribbean countries since they have similar food security problems. But these common problems are embedded in different socio-economic and political circumstances that have shaped their food security policies.

Food security in Africa is precarious. About 35 million people in Africa will need food aid this year alone. The problem is not a recent one. It is the cumulative effect of decades of structural problems – with disastrous impacts on agriculture, nutrition and health resource management – and of allocation problems. It is found not only in the classic cases of famine (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Mali, Mauritania and Niger), but also in the Southern African sub-region that was not long ago considered relatively well off and therefore immune to famine (Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

On the other hand the Caribbean, except during hurricanes and natural disasters, has not been the subject of news headlines in the same way as Africa. Food insecurity is probably more the result of social and political factors than of droughts or floods, which occur at long intervals. What precipitates food insecurity in the Caribbean is historically different because of its long history of sugar plantations and inequitable land distribution in small island states.

However, the prevailing political structures, controlled by elites, are not so different from those in Africa. Agricultural policies tend to privilege the wealthy and powerful. In common with Africa, export cash crops (coffee, tea, bananas and others) are priorities for government policy. The production of food for local consumption is largely left to subsistence producers, with inadequate resources and infrastructure.

Ironically, food security has not become an election issue or a matter of public debate in either Africa or the Caribbean, except among the political elite. While most countries in the two regions have elaborate structures for economic governance, and anti-corruption campaigns to safeguard public financial management, none has established a food security governance regime to ensure the availability, access, quality and stability of food.

## Empowering civil society

If politicians felt that their political success depended on ensuring food security, food policies in these countries would have acquired a sense of urgency. It is not just an issue for parliamentary committees responsible for oversight. It is more importantly a question of empowering national civil society organisation, NGOs and pressure groups to exert added pressure on governments to act on food security as a matter of priority.

The governance of food security could then be treated not as a separate and periodic concern, taken seriously only when famine and natural disasters strike, but as an integral part of the overall governance debate. It should also be integrated into good governance as defined by the institutions of global economic governance. But even this will not be enough if civil society organisations, NGOs, pressure groups and social movements are not allowed a voice in how food policies are developed and implemented. ■

1. Professor of Politics of Development at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, and the Department of Political Science, University of Leiden, the Netherlands.
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3. Mohamed Salih, M.A. (1999) in C. Thomas and P. Wilken (eds.) *Globalisation, Human Security and the African Experience*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, pp. 132-2
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5. March, J. G. and Johan P. Olsen (1995) *Democratic Governance*. New York: The Free Press.
6. For example, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), World Food Centre, Commission for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), Commission on Sustainable Development, World Food Programme (WFP), the Hunger Commission, WTO Agreement on Trade Intellectual Property Rights, Food and Biodiversity. There is also a myriad of civil society organisations and NGOs, including NGOs' Forum on Food Security, Genetic Resources Action International (GRAIN), Rural Advancement International (RAI), World Resources Institute etc.

# Food security:

## at the heart of EU poverty reduction strategies

Given the multi-layered nature of food security – encompassing availability, access, vulnerability to shortages, and individual nutrition, at the global, regional, national and household level – for the EU, food security is embedded in strategies for poverty reduction and national development. This means three things; increasing income opportunities for the poor, improving their access to resources such as water, land, economic services – things that are needed to function normally in society – and thirdly empowering the poor so that they have the capacity to change their environment. Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Assistance **Poul Nielson** spoke to the *Courier* about the policy and the lessons learned from the current crisis in southern and eastern Africa.

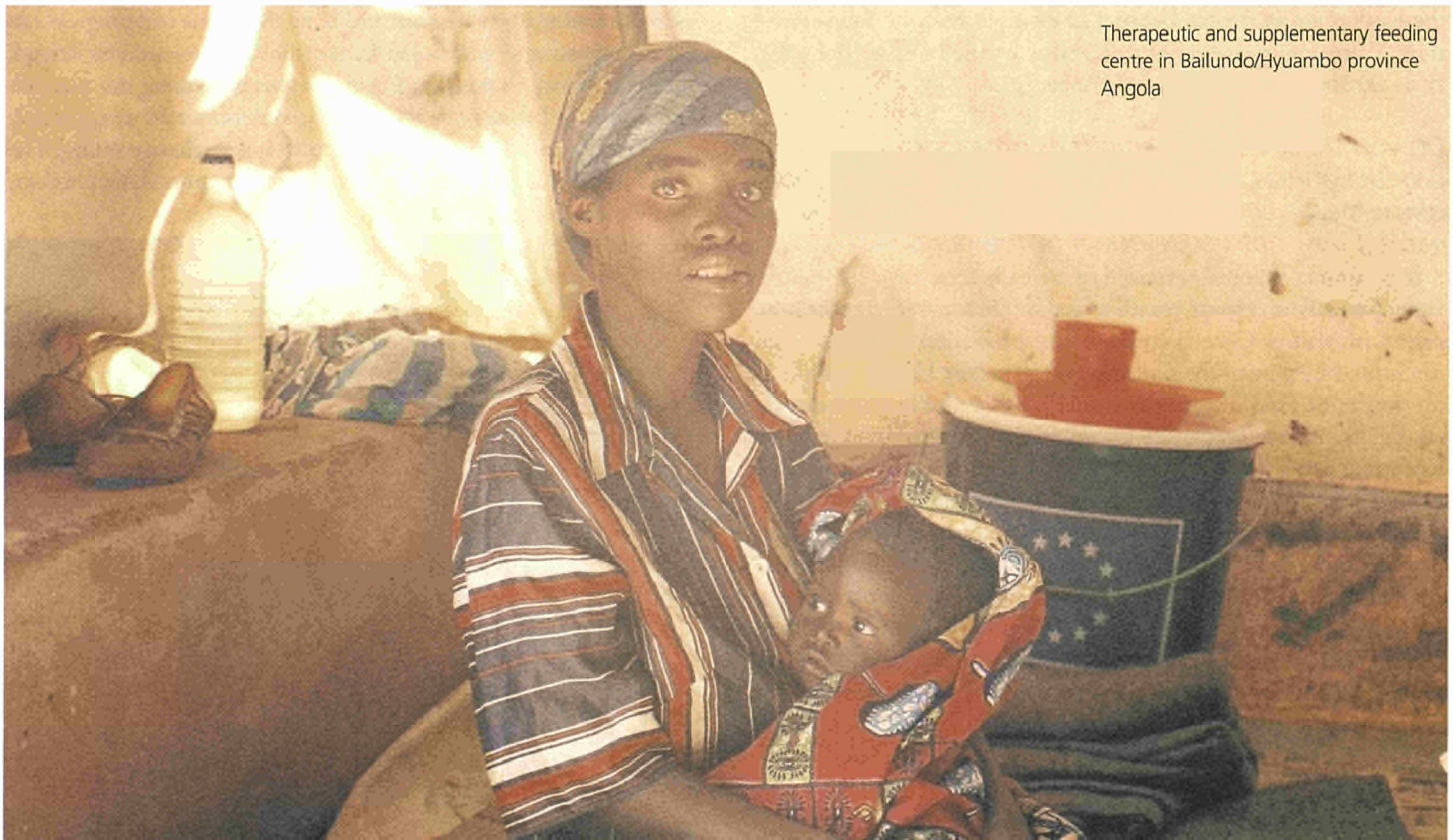
**Dorothy Morrissey**

*Are you optimistic about reaching the international community's objective of halving hunger by 2015?*

I am optimistic, for several reasons. First, studies have demonstrated that 80% of hunger is related to conflicts. For that reason it should absolutely be possible to change that situation, as it is a man-made problem to a large extent. In conflict situations it is very difficult to get farming into the focus of attention. Secondly, the broader issue is that food insecurity has a lot to do with the dangerous reality of being poor. The hard core problem is subsistence farming, and the vulnerability of people. The large majority of the hungry are the rural poor, landless and with limited resources, who are poorly educated. They are not near the market economy, that is, the money economy. These are the farming families for whom really nothing has changed. So it is clear that hunger is to a large extent an outcome of poverty, and moving forward on the food security agenda is very much the same as fighting poverty. The third – and logically easier – element is that global Official Development Assistance (ODA) is now only at 0.27% of GNI. If it were at the recommended level of 0.7% of course it would be doable. Calling the bluff on the rhetoric, it's as simple as that.

*The approach to food security used to be that the country would aim at self-sufficiency. But that has evolved into a broader concept, where markets play a greater role. In this paradigm countries would not necessarily be able to produce all the food they need themselves, but they should be able to sell what they can best produce. What is the Commission's view?*

That makes sense. But one of the realisations following this current crisis is that there is a real disconnect; the very vulnerable and poor subsistence farmers are not in the loop. The supply of food aid we have mobilised and funded is more than 99% bought in the region. This illustrates that we function as a sort of catalyst for creating or enhancing the emergence of a market regionally. One problem is that these markets are still regulated, often with monopoly control of imports and exports and more or less fixed prices. My view is not that liberalising alone will make things work, but that a market is necessary in



Therapeutic and supplementary feeding centre in Bailundo/Hyuambo province Angola

© Androulla Kaminara

Poul Nielson

In Zambia the whole population is not facing famine, but a minority in areas where it is a recurring problem

order to give the right signals to the agricultural community. It will never be intelligent to have self-sufficiency as the proof of success – the international and the regional division of labour makes sense. For Zambia the problem has also been that the country has historically seen itself as the rare case of an industrialised African nation, relying on mining. But that has not been an economic asset because of mismanagement and a lot of other things. They now realise that they had better go back to basics. So it makes a lot of sense that we have given priority to rural development in our country strategy. We are doing the same thing in Angola, which has wonderful potential for agriculture, but there is a risk, that because of diamonds and oil, this potential will not be developed. So, opening up, having a market developing, is sensible. But then those left out marginalised groups must be remembered. The additional problem is that the combined impact of malaria and HIV/AIDS is dramatically increased with the weakening of people because of drought and the food situation. Vulnerability is higher; the ability of the body to fight the virus is reduced because of poor nutrition.

*Do you think that the emphasis on export production has had a negative impact on production for domestic consumption? After all, the cash earned may not trickle down to the poor.*

…or former colonial connections, which may have led to the same patterns of export production, for instance if you look at cotton in Mali or Côte D'Ivoire, or the plantation economy. This can indeed be part of the problem, but generally I don't think it is the source of food insecurity. Population pressure is a real threat, which means that people are forced to the periphery of the good lands into areas where it is more arid, where erosion is more of a risk, and further away from markets. The pressure on fuel wood and on forests is part of the same problem. Contrary to what many people think, there isn't a lot of space available. There are some African countries where this is true, but space is a function of a number of factors such as water and soil quality. The whole Sahelian belt is a case in point. Overpopulation of cattle is a huge problem, as overgrazing accelerates desertification, making the environment more and more vulnerable.

*Ethiopia – one of the countries currently facing famine – is Africa's leading coffee exporter and coffee generates vital income for the country's 67 million population. But the huge slump in coffee prices has had a crippling effect. Here it is a problem of oversupply on the world market, and not a problem of trade barriers. Does this not cast doubt on the idea of free trade?*

True, but the coffee crisis is a real market phenomenon. It also shows that we don't have enough good ideas when we advocate diversification. We have used the term diversification, and the World Bank inspires countries like Vietnam and others to move into coffee production and export as a cash crop. Quite ironically, in the name of diversification, we have told everybody to do the same. And why is this the case? Well, it is a commodity which we cannot produce in the rich North, and it is a commodity where there is free access, although there is tariff escalation protection. But then again experts tell us that each market is somewhat special. But the real irony is – and that is where trade must be discussed – that we don't have ten suggestions when we are advocating diversification. And why don't we? Because of the protection in agriculture. It is a relevant starting point for attacking the protection and subsidies of agriculture in the North. There is no other possible conclusion.

*There was a similar problem in the cotton-producing African countries, caused by low prices because of subsidised cotton…*

… especially from the US. All this is mounting to a meaningful pressure and we have to work and hope that some real progress can be negotiated and concluded in the Doha Development Round. The way we try to position Europe in this is defining our position in the world. I think this is extremely important. We are pursuing this more or less product by product, trying to change things. The "Everything But Arms" initiative will have a very important impact, and we are seeing it already with the very difficult and heavily subsidised commodity of sugar. There, the access into Europe is gradually increasing year by year, to become eventually totally free. For the first time, last year Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Sudan and Mozambique exported sugar into Europe. In Mauritius they are moving capacity to Tanzania

"The supply of food aid we have mobilised and funded is more than 99% bought in the region. This illustrates that we function as a sort of catalyst for creating or enhancing the emergence of a market regionally".

and Mozambique, setting up production and processing there to attack the market in Europe, from the basis of LDC production. This is genuine diversification. The other established sugar producers under the Sugar Protocol will have to adapt and meet the competition at normal market price. They have a strong tradition, they know how to do these things, but they also need to modernise their production. But they will face a hard time of adapting. This is a ticking bomb under the existing European protection of sugar.

*Because of the focus on the current crisis, are we getting a skewed picture of the crisis and the progress that has been made in food security?*

Yes. There is a risk of not getting a correct assessment of the situation. To gain public attention and mobilise support and money, there is a risk that humanitarian and development NGOs paint a picture which is necessary but might not be totally correct. This is the same for the World Food Programme (WFP). For us it is not easy to stick to a balance where we maintain the long-term food security strategy and don't get dragged into a short-term food aid action. We will provide the food aid whenever needed, but we have to push for policy change in these countries. This is the discussion we have with Zambia but even more with Ethiopia which is historically the big case of food dependency and reliance on being helped. We have to insist on a shift of priorities, and that is what we are doing. This goes far back, even to the Cold War, and working up a client relationship. It was also based on very perverse subsidies to agriculture in the US and also Europe, which made it convenient to get rid of surplus production, subsidised by taxpayers, without disturbing our market. But unfortunately this created a situation where the incentive to create sustainable agriculture in the South was damaged. We have come some way and we are very determined and stubborn in insisting on changing the accent.

Also, we have decided to strengthen our capability on this point, and to have a more systematic sharing of assessment with our member states in these countries. They all now realise they we cannot rely only on the WFP's assessment. They got about 40% of what they appealed for, and this more or less looks adequate. Of course it would be nice for people to have more food; but some improvement in the precision is important, so that we have more authority in defining the situation, and to maintain the credibility of these appeals.

Poul Nielson

*Also related to the current crisis, it seems that there are different EU and US approaches to food security. Are there really two different philosophies?*

No, in principle not any more. But there were bigger differences some years ago. Mr Natsios, USAID administrator, and I have managed to agree. We discussed Ethiopia very thoroughly a couple of years ago, and we agreed to put the accent on food security. But then with the crisis in Southern Africa and with the increase in the subsidies to US agriculture, things have maybe turned backwards a little again, but there isn't a basic disagreement.

*In terms of food aid, the EU policy seems to be quite different...*

Yes, we buy food in the region, and they send subsidised American grain. That is a difference. But on the balance between food aid and food security, there we don't have a big disagreement. But in how we manage in a crisis situation, the differences are still big. In the discussion about tying or untying of aid, the US position is still that they don't want to discuss untying of food aid and the transport of it. And we haven't even touched on the GMO drama.

*What is the Commission's line on GMOs?*

This discussion came to a point where I found it necessary to say that a reasonable proposition is to say to the Americans; "if you stop lying about us, we will stop telling the truth about you". The background for that was, for months, a wrong presentation of our line had been circulating, and being expressed at higher levels in the US system. We never took the position on behalf of these countries; our position was that it is their decision. And on whether we were trying to tell them not to accept GMO maize because that would negatively impact on their ability to export other agricultural products to Europe – this is where they lied. We never said that. Some NGOs have said something like that; that is the documentation we get when we ask the Americans.

*From a trading point of view, wouldn't it affect developing countries agricultural exports to Europe?*

No, not necessarily. The de-linkage is scientifically well established. For Zambia there was no evidence of anything which would have been a problem. We have a regime on what is acceptable. Everything must be considered in the light of that. But in these discussions over the last half year there wasn't any complication for that reason. It's also a disagreement on attitude, how to cooperate with partner countries. The disagreement was also increased and heightened a little when WFP asked the Commission and other donors to pay the costs of milling the maize, because the Americans would not pay. Of course we said no. It would be outrageous to ask European taxpayers to do this, absolutely unacceptable. Even the fact that they asked us put some strain on the performance of WFP.

*And if WFP had paid, that would have used quite a large part of their funds...*

That is what they ultimately did. So they added a cost, so that given a certain volume of money, less was delivered. ■

# Overcoming food insecurity in Malawi:

## taking the road less travelled

The lean season of 2001-2002 is destined to remain deeply set in Malawi's collective memory as one of the most difficult food crises the country has known in the past decade. Understanding the reasons behind this crisis is key to turning the page of hunger in Malawi. From food aid to long term poverty reduction, how can a country at the brink of starvation meet, at the same time, the challenge of avoiding hunger once again. One year after the humanitarian crisis was declared, this article looks at what has been learned, what has changed, and what has been achieved. The food crisis in Malawi is a genuine access crisis, and the key to food security is poverty reduction.

**Claire Barrault***

There are many reasons for the recent humanitarian crisis in Malawi; chronic poverty, high prevalence of HIV/AIDS – with officially close to one-fifth of the population infected – shortages and high prices of maize on the market in early 2002, mostly due to speculation, decrease on the world market of tobacco, tea and coffee prices, considered in Malawi as the ultimate "cash crops", the reduction of labour opportunities in the southern African region, and lastly, unfavourable weather conditions in some parts of the country.

The most poignant factor is poverty. 65.3 per cent of the population of Malawi is poor, with a per capita income of approximately $220 per year (the lowest in the entire southern Africa region). Most of these people live on less than €1 a day. "You can blame the weather, but if people are too poor to cope with bad harvests, they are at risk of starvation," says Paul Ginies, food security expert at the EU delegation in Malawi. "More than 80 per cent of the population relies on income from the land. And when you look deeper into the data, you see that large portions of these populations live in the countryside, but in fact have little access to land". What solutions are left for them? Most of the time, casual labour, known as "ganyu", is the only resort for many households. This type of labour is currently paid only about 30 Malawi Kwacha (MK) per day (€0,33 in 2003). This rate has remained almost stable for the past ten years. On the other hand, the MK has lost three times its value to the dollar in that same period. What does this mean for the poor in Malawi? They can now procure three times less food for their families. "Do the math, and you will see that it had become close to impossible for a large number of households to purchase food. Before it was possible to purchase six kilos of maize with 30 MK, now you can only get two," adds Paul Ginies. This remains true one year later for a large proportion of the poorest households, even though the price of food has remained relatively low, in comparison to last year.

Adriaan Esterhuizen

### The response of the donor community

Once the state of disaster was proclaimed by the President of the Republic of Malawi Dr Bakili Muluzi in early 2002, the donor community responded rapidly by organising emergency humanitarian aid, and pledged 208,000 metric tons of maize – USAID, DFID, the EU, CIDA. The European Union pledged 95,000 metric tons, and of that, has provided 30,000 metric tons of maize for free distribution and 15,000 metric tons of nutritional supplements to assist health centres to cope with the flow of malnourished children and mothers. The remaining 40,000 metric tons will go towards replenishing the National Food Grain Reserve. Today Malawi boasts a relatively low malnutrition rate, mostly thanks to donor and multilateral organisations' support. On top of this emergency response, the EU strengthened its ongoing food security programme aimed at tackling poverty, at the very root of the crisis, insisting that even though food aid is indeed a necessity, it can never be a sustainable solution to hunger. Where most organisations were looking towards free food, the EU focused on empowering people, farmers and ganyus, by investing in cash for work activities.

### Regional purchase policy

The EU did in fact choose the road less travelled when it decided to procure all its food aid locally and regionally. One year ago, alarmist reports stated there was no maize in the region, due to the poor weather conditions. Nonetheless, all EU food aid was procured in Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania, where poverty-stricken farmers were eager to sell their produce for a good price.

This regional purchase policy also gave an assurance that all the maize would be GMO free. Local varieties of "white" maize conform with local habits and have that guarantee, reinforced by strict monitoring. Jean Francois

**The Public Works programme is a joint EU-Government of Malawi activity which aims to alleviate poverty by providing income-generating activities. It demonstrates that cash is indeed a sustainable alternative to food aid, when food is available regionally.**

Lamy, in charge of monitoring food aid imports for the EU in Malawi, says "there are controls at departure and arrival of the cargos. We have a very strict quality control system and it has proven very effective, as only top quality corn is allowed to be offloaded".

The Strategic Grain Reserve, at a record low one-year ago, is now almost full. On top of donor emergency food aid, of which 141,000 metric tons was distributed, the Malawi government has procured about 225,000 metric tons of maize. This food was meant to fill the huge gap of more than 600,000 metric tons in early 2002. One year down the line, the actual nutritional gap has been successfully filled by free food aid from the donor community. On the other hand, the high cost of the commercial maize stocks is putting a heavy burden on the national budget as this food remains unsold even at the subsidised price of 17 MK per kilo; another consequence of the people's lack of purchasing power.

## Empowering the poorest by offering immediate income opportunities

The EU's evolving response has been directed towards short, medium and long-term action. For the past years, part of its medium and long-term response has been concentrated on income generating activities in poverty stricken areas. The Public Works programme is one of the most successful initiatives conducted in Malawi to date.

**"I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference."**

**Robert Frost**

This programme is a joint government of Malawi-EU activity that aims to alleviate poverty. It has been operational since April 2001 and implemented in five pilot districts (Lilongwe west, Dowa west, Mchinji, Ntchisi and Kasungu). This area was chosen considering multiple factors including the poverty level, population, food security, state of the road network etc. The programme focuses on three components: road rehabilitation and maintenance, forestry and irrigation. It aims to improve people's access to markets, services and major road networks, increasing average incomes by involving as many people as possible in all its rehabilitation works. It also improves food security and incomes by increasing the overall practice of dry season cropping, through better irrigation and farming practices.

When the programme ends in March 2004, it is expected that 2,250 km of feeder roads will have been rehabilitated, 24 million trees will have been planted, and 225 irrigation schemes, involving 1,800 farmers will have been established. So far, 10,000 people have been involved in the road rehabilitation contracts.

The programme provides employment and income generation for the poorest segments of the population by sponsoring labour intensive activities – 85 per cent of the road maintenance works' cost is allocated to labour, enabling whole communities to generate incomes and purchase commodities. One hundred people are employed for every 10-km portion of road rehabilitation. This represents an income of €1,000 for the community involved.

Adriaan Esterhuizen

**The Public Works programme also improves food security and incomes by increasing the overall practice of dry season cropping, through better irrigation and farming practices.**

The programme also helps farmers to improve their production through better irrigation, thus increasing household incomes, food security and household nutrition. The introduction of treadle pumps has enabled farmers to grow a second crop, a revolution in Malawi where winter cropping was up to now very scarce. Lastly, the programme supports the production of fuel wood and poles for consumption and sale.

The Public Works programme is funded entirely by the EU with €15 million over four years. Because of the food crisis in 2002, an additional €6 million has been allocated from the food security budget line to address immediate needs linked to poverty. The objectives of this particular component are to increase labour intensive road and bridge rehabilitation and maintenance (up to 650 kilometres) and supply treadle pumps and other garden equipment to 1,100 farmers. In summary, the challenge is to "inject" these funds at a rate of €1 million per month and demonstrate that cash is indeed a sustainable alternative to food aid, when food is available regionally.

Today, the key to food security in Malawi is poverty reduction. The food crisis is now clearly identified by all stakeholders as a genuine access crisis. How does Malawi go from free food aid to giving appropriate purchasing power to all households? The key lies with sustainable long-term strategies that include a powerful response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Only then will Malawians see the end of cyclical food insecurity. ■

* Information & Communication Officer - Food Security Programme
European Union Delegation in Malawi

# Food security in ACP countries:
## the CTA's strategies and actions

The concept of food security has evolved over the last few decades. Initially considered simply in terms of there being enough food to go round, food security now also encompasses stability of supply (guaranteeing enough food in the longer term) and the problem of access to food (taking account of the excessively poor purchasing power of vulnerable groups). In this article, **Carl B. Greenidge**, Director of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)[1], describes the organisation's work in the area of food security and the conclusions they have been able to draw.

During the past ten years food security has been much discussed in the international arena. This is due to three main factors: the realisation during the 1980s that food stocks had become alarmingly low, the increase in international prices, and concerns over the impact of WTO and GATT international trade policies on the viability of agriculture in most developing countries. Famine in Africa, which we used to think of as a scourge of the pre-1960s, has made these discussions even more urgent.

In spite of all the research aimed at analysing and understanding the causes of starvation and famine-related deaths, Africa is still hit by famine. Amartya Sen's seminal work on famine highlighted the inequality of opportunities for sufficient access to food, earning him the Nobel Prize for Economic Sciences in 1998. Within the context of food security, the need to assert the right to production, marketing, work and aid is now widely recognised. However, this view does not seem to have been taken into account in the implementation of development strategies at international, regional and national levels. The appearance of famine in certain countries, notably in southern Africa, is a stark illustration of this omission.

Food security has been a major concern of the CTA for the past five years. The development of programmes to promote food security is one of the CTA's main priorities for the five-year period from 2001-2005. In general, the exchanges and the ideas expressed at meetings organised by the CTA on the best strategies to adopt in the area of food security have focused on three main areas:

- a better understanding of the problem of food security and proposing methods to improve identification at local level of vulnerable groups and the structural causes of food insecurity in rural areas;
- formulating coherent policies and programmes that can benefit from support from governments, donors and NGOs;
- helping to develop suitable institutions and efficient information systems to improve management of food security programmes.

The CTA's work has shown that government policies and other forms of public intervention, often supported and conducted as part of aid programmes and projects implemented by donors, have a considerable influence on food security in ACP countries. Specific strategic areas have been identified including, in particular, the stabilisation of food prices, policies for individual agricultural sectors that affect the food security of vulnerable groups, the particular role of women in food security, special food and nutrition intervention programmes, the ACP countries' institutional capacity to reduce food insecurity and, lastly, the value of information in strategies for combating food insecurity. Famine continues to wreak havoc in a number of ACP countries. It is essential therefore to study how these proposed strategies can be turned into real action programmes in order to attain a situation of food security in ACP states.

**Women play a major role in food security, whether as vulnerable groups or as individuals who can contribute to procuring food security for the household and each of its members.**

**One of the main factors contributing to food insecurity in rural households, in particular as regards child malnutrition, is that women simply have too much work**

Roberto Faidutti/CTA

## The impact of price stabilisation and trade-related interventions

One of the main problems with the liberalisation of food markets in ACP countries is the major fluctuations that ensue, jeopardising households that do not have a stable food supply, particularly the rural population and consumers whose income is mainly taken up by the purchase of food. It is not really a question of price fluctuations per se, because these are to a certain extent essential for the proper functioning of internal markets. It is excessive fluctuations that pose the real threat. The aim is therefore to promote policies which, in the context of liberalisation and privatisation, effectively limit large price fluctuations in internal markets. To achieve control over major fluctuations, policies must aim to:

- lower internal and external tariff barriers to encourage the development of internal markets and regional integration with neighbouring countries;
- set up strategic monetary and grain reserves at national, community and village level;
- create an environment that will support the development of a system of credit for small farmers and traders to encourage them to be part of the private sector;
- ensure market transparency through the dissemination of precise, relevant information through an efficient system providing information on agricultural markets and the state of national agri-food supplies and those of other market players.

## Structural agricultural policies affecting vulnerable groups

There is no doubt that structural agricultural policies can help improve the food security situation of vulnerable groups, particularly when they lessen the structural constraints on rural households in marginal regions by allowing them to increase their agricultural productivity in the medium and long term. Although in most cases this form of intervention has been shown to have its limits, it can nevertheless be revised to improve the food security of vulnerable groups.

Suggestions put forward include:

- targeting or adapting agricultural research according to the agricultural/ecological conditions and socio-economic needs of vulnerable groups;
- improving technical advice services and systems for supplying the elements involved in food production so as to reach vulnerable groups;
- relieving work constraints on vulnerable groups through the development and implementation of specific agricultural programmes such as agricultural mechanisation programmes,
- improving rural infrastructure and means of transport so as to guarantee supplies of food and agricultural raw materials for food production.

## The role of women in food security

Women play a major role in food security, whether as vulnerable groups or as individuals who can contribute to procuring food security for the household and each of its members. The various parties involved in food insecurity must therefore integrate this dual approach when devising and drawing up food security programmes specifically designed for women.

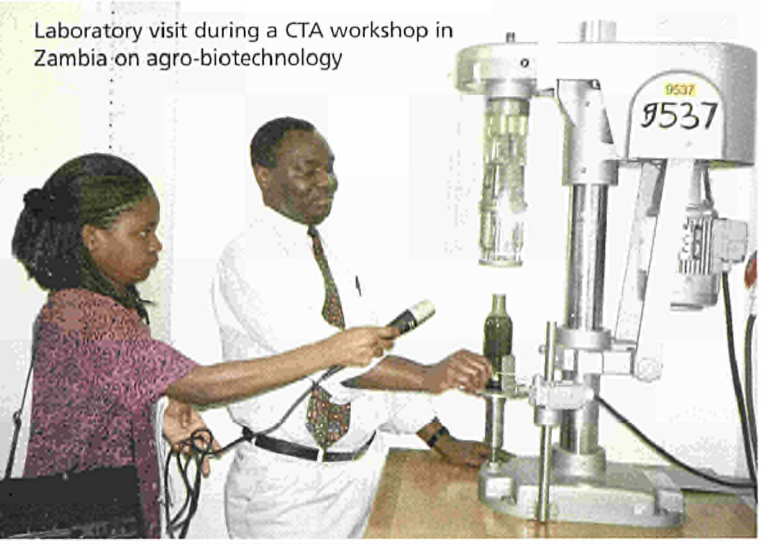
Conclusions drawn from activities organised by the CTA have confirmed the relevance of this approach. In particular, they have highlighted that one of the main factors contributing to food insecurity in rural households, in particular as regards child malnutrition, is that women simply have too much work. This is a problem that is due in particular to an inappropriate division of labour between men and women. There are measures that can be taken to ease rural women's excessive workload:

- improve the supply of clean drinking water to prevent childhood diseases and reduce the amount of time women have to spend in search of water and looking after sick children;
- improve health coverage in rural areas to allow women to devote more time to their work and thus increase their productivity;
- encourage the creation and dissemination of food processing technologies to reduce chores and free up more time for food production and caring for children.

Roberto Faidutti/CTA

Roberto Faidutti/CTA

CTA




Laboratory visit during a CTA workshop in Zambia on agro-biotechnology

Measures can also be taken to strengthen the position of women as key figures in achieving food security, such as:

- improving women's access to productive resources, i.e. land, credit and technologies designed to increase production and consumption of food-producing crops;
- enhance rural women's skills through training, education, publication and network creation programmes;
- promote and develop agricultural techniques for women in terms of production, agricultural work after the harvest, and selling.

The situation of women in ACP countries is a complex issue. Measures aimed at improving their lives may fail to reach their target due to ignorance of the various factors at play within the household and on the differing situations of women in the home. For policies and other actions aimed at improving women's lives to be effective, research must be done on the socio-cultural and financial conditions of rural women in villages and rural communities.

## Special food and nutrition intervention programmes

These actions (food for work, extra food, grain reserves) are merely simple tools to improve access to food. To be effective, they must form an integral part of a global development strategy and take account of local conditions and the concerns of the people involved. One of the major issues to emerge from exchanges organised by the CTA is the need to put in place mechanisms that allow participation at village level by local people in the planning, drawing-up and implementation of these actions, which requires strengthening their management skills through training and education programmes.

## Developing the capacities of institutions

Institutions have a crucial role to play in all aspects of food security. The term 'institutions' encompasses the various public bodies and also private bodies such as producers' or women's associations, cooperatives and village associations. The main problem in ACP countries as regards institutions is the lack of coordination, interaction and consistency both vertically and horizontally, coupled with the lack of knowledge, technical experience and management skills, particularly at local level.

The CTA's work in the area of food security has shown that institutions in ACP countries can be improved in particular through better coordination and circulation of information at all institutional levels, optimising human resources through the implementation of training programmes, and promoting the concept of user involvement in the design and implementation of projects, especially infrastructure projects such as road development and irrigation networks.

Strengthening these institutions' abilities should allow them to put in place reliable and efficient regulatory policies and strategies to meet the challenges of globalisation and market liberalisation.

## Effective, specialised information systems: a targeted response by the CTA

The effectiveness of intervention by public or private entities and of food security programmes for vulnerable groups depends on the existence of operational early warning systems for monitoring food and nutrition levels, together with policy measures put in place to deal with these situations. In addition to such mechanisms, market information systems can also support food security by ensuring greater market transparency and better regional market integration.

With this in mind, the CTA has launched a market information system (MIS) programme. This programme is based on the principle that better circulation of information can help producers by allowing them to benefit from fair prices and reduce price fluctuations. Having timely information on the prices of foodstuffs or other aspects of the market can also serve as an early warning indicator, allowing the various parties involved to respond appropriately.

In addition to implementing the market information systems programme and organising meetings to provide ACP experts with a forum for exchanging experiences and thoughts on food security strategies, the CTA has also developed a range of products and services. For example, the CTA's "Spore" magazine has published articles on food security and CTA also provides support for others who wish to publish material on this theme, as well as supplying ACP experts with publications and information on food security.

Another way to increase the effectiveness of food security measures is to make more use of e-mail and the internet to collect and disseminate information. The CTA is developing an IT (Information Technology) programme for ACP countries as a means of achieving this objective.

The issue of food security is a complex one that spans many sectors. In addition to the aspects discussed above there is the problem of HIV/AIDS, which not only jeopardises food production but also raises the numbers of sick people who must be looked after. The challenge facing the CTA is therefore to develop, via its 2001-2005 Strategic Plan, strategies and activities to enable ACP countries to better manage information and communication to deal with the whole complex issue of food security. ■

1. The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) was established in 1983 under the Lomé Convention. Since 2000, CTA has operated within the framework of the ACP-EC Cotonou Agreement. CTA's tasks are to develop and provide services that improve access to information for agricultural and rural development, and to strengthen the capacity of ACP countries to produce, acquire, exchange and utilise information in this area. www.cta.org

# Forecasting, food security and famine prevention:

## is there a link?

As the spectre of famine once again threatens the lives of millions of people in Africa, Asia and other parts of the developing world, questions may validly be raised as to why, in the age of satellite imagery, advanced forecasting techniques and genetic crop modification, events of this nature still occur. Advances in scientific understanding of the El Niño phenomenon, together with the advent of super computers capable of highly sophisticated forecast modelling, had given rise to the hope that not only would it be possible to accurately predict short and long term changes in weather and climate, but that early warning of such events would enable governments to manage the impact of these natural events on food security, particularly among the poor and vulnerable.

**Chris Tapscott***

That these advances have not served to reduce, let alone eliminate, the threat of famine is all too plainly evident, as food insecurity and vulnerability remain endemic in many parts of the world. In such a context, valid questions may also be posed as to whether the mere existence of effective early warning systems does not, in some respects, distract attention from the more fundamental determinants of poverty and hunger, and whether forecasting focuses undue attention on the symptoms of famine rather than on its causes.

### What are the causes of famine?

In the literature, distinctions are sometimes drawn between so-called "man-made" famines and those that are caused "by nature." This approach attempts to distinguish between those famines brought about by some natural event (such as a drought or a flood), and those which occur as a consequence of some form of social change (for example, war or the collapse of local or regional markets). However, while it is necessary to recognise the direct impact of nature in the development of famine, it is profoundly misleading to draw a distinction between famines that are precipitated by "natural" forces and those that emerge as an outcome of human activity. This is because we know that famine is, first and foremost, a social phenomenon (the inability of large segments of a society to gain access to food), which may be influenced by natural forces or social processes (singularly or together). The impact of a natural occurrence such as drought, thus, is likely to depend more on the way in which a society is organised than on the natural event itself. This is perhaps most obviously illustrated by the fact that many societies continue to survive and thrive in areas of endemic drought or where there is little or no rainfall, and here affluent states in the Middle East spring readily to mind.

It was the Nobel laureate, Amartya Sen, in his seminal work, *Poverty and Famines* (1981)[1], who drew public attention to the fact that famine can, and often does, occur where there is no overall shortage of food. Sen pointed out that when an individual household's "entitlement" (that is, its ability to acquire food through the legal means available in a society) is eroded because of a fall in asset ownership (in the form of crops, livestock, property, jobs, etc.) its members will, if not protected by some form of social security, face starvation no matter what the prevailing food situation might be. To a considerable extent, Sen shifted the focus of attention from a geographic region to a household unit of analysis. This approach went some way in theorising what now seems obvious: why drought affects different groups in different ways within the same locality.

### Understanding household food security and vulnerability

The manner in which households secure access to food (their entitlement) varies considerably within and between communities in any given country. While some secure their needs by growing their own food, others achieve them through wage labour. In all instances the ability of households to mobilise resources (and hence to acquire food) will be influenced by an array of factors including their social class, ethnicity, access to education, access to credit, markets, extension services, etc. Threats to food security, thus, are not solely a function of production failure at the household level, but also of institutional and policy failure. To that extent, household food insecurity and poverty cannot be seen as short-term crises but rather as the outcome of long-term trends resulting from the failure of government policy, and from the political orientation and priorities of those in power. The growing threat of famine in Zimbabwe, where an ill-conceived land reform programme precipitated a collapse in agricultural production, is symptomatic of such a state of affairs. In such a context, too, the ability of rural households (in particular) to achieve some form of food security, is determined as much by the relations of power in the society as it is by physical factors such as climate and the resource endowment of the country.

For a variety of reasons, both historical and contemporary (including ethnic and political strife, mismanagement and the structure of the national and global economy), the poor lack resources and generally live at the margins of food security. As a consequence, the onset of any major (or even minor) changes in climate is likely to affect them adversely. Thus, the distinction, often drawn by drought relief agencies, between drought-induced poverty and chronic ("normal") poverty, is not particularly useful. In most developing societies, there are always those poor households who, as a consequence of their limited skills and resources, are always vulnerable to the impacts of drought, floods and other natural disasters. Such households require social security nets to support them through periods of hardship, perhaps more than they need an advanced warning of its advent. This is because there is often little, in any event, they could do to protect themselves from impending disaster.

At this stage it is important to note, that although the evidence of the past two decades has shown that famines can occur in circumstances where there has been no significant decline in the availability of food, it is also certain that a decrease in the overall availability of food (for example, where there has been a crop failure as a consequence of drought or floods) can, both directly and indirectly, precipitate famine. A critique of entitlement theory, in fact, has been that the approach has tended to play down the significance of food shortage as a major determinant of famine to an excessive degree. This, for example, is evident in situations where poor harvests resulting from drought have led to job losses and aggravated poverty in associated sectors (food processing, marketing etc.) as well as to rising food prices.

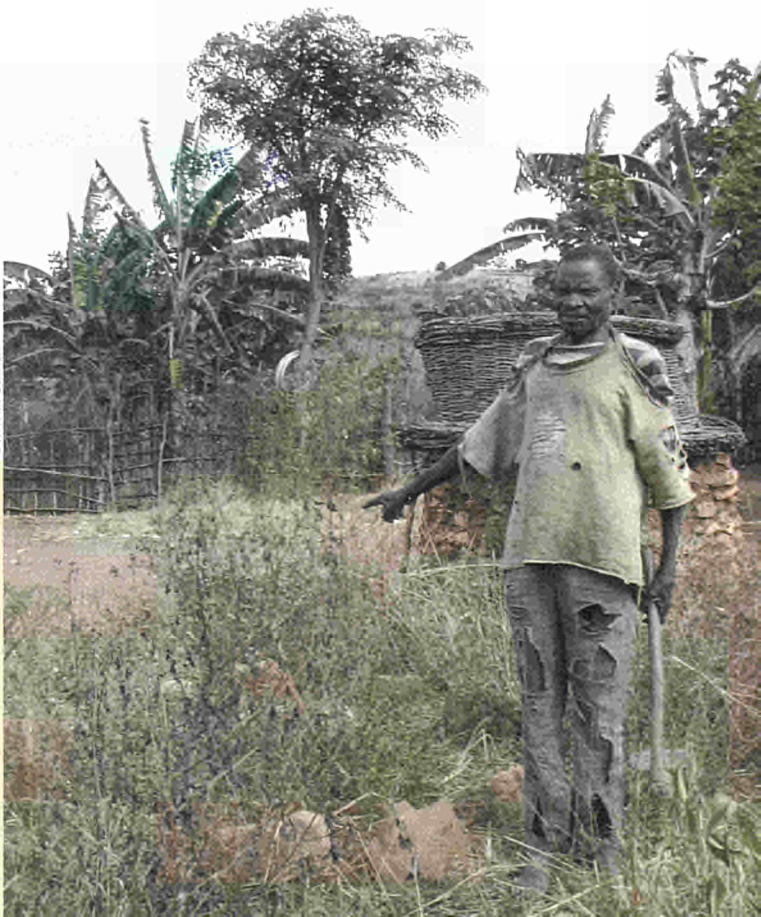
Despite this limitation, however, entitlement theory has highlighted the fact that it is not possible to predict the likelihood of certain types of famines solely on the basis of the trends of nature. Perhaps more importantly, it has also made explicit the disturbing reality, that knowledge of the onset of adverse climatic conditions or even of recurring natural trends, of itself, is insufficient to reduce the risk of famine. Instead, what is of critical importance in such situations is how the information generated is received and how it is acted upon.

## The establishment of early warning systems

The establishment of early warning systems, typically, is viewed by governments, both developed and developing, as central to the avoidance of famine. The success of such systems rests on a number of components. The most critical of these includes effective detection, evaluation and prediction of the scale and timing of the threat (entailing an array of climatic forecasting techniques as well food security and nutritional surveillance measures). It would also include the preparation of warning messages, which are accurate both in specifying the exact nature of the impending threat and which identify those most at risk. Such information needs to be consistent and must be communicated to those who need to know (decision makers and communities) in a manner which is easily understood. The real test of the effectiveness of early warning systems, however, is the extent to which they prepare governments and their communities to face impending threats, that is to say, the measures they are to put in place to minimise the impact of droughts, floods and other shocks, and to avoid famine.

For a warning system to operate effectively, all of the above conditions must be met. Thus, no matter how efficient meteorological forecasts might be, their impact is likely to be limited if the message is inaccurately or improperly transmitted. At the same time, accurate warnings will have little effect, if the right forms of intervention are not made or if the population is so ill-prepared that it is incapable of coping with the onset of drought, hail or whatever. Where early warning systems are established, coverage at the national level is frequently partial (for example, more remote communities, which are often amongst the most vulnerable, are monitored irregularly), or data collection is not accurate (the collection of anthropometric data necessary to determine nutritional status, for example, is frequently inaccurate), or it is not timely, is not well processed, or is not disseminated to policymakers, or, if received, is not acted upon.

Over and above the unavoidable fact that early warning systems tend to treat symptoms rather than causes, their effective implementation is always problematic in societies which lack resources and in which administrative capacity is limited. Food security is a complex phenomenon with extensive cross-sectoral linkages. However, it is still frequently understood, by many public services, primarily in terms of food production, and hence as being the responsibility of departments of agriculture and rural development. Where food security and nutrition issues are addressed by other line ministries (for example, health,



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**Kaundama village, 50 km north of Lilongwe. Elia Benela points to the spot where his family granary used to stand. Last year, Elia's wife, daughter and three grandchildren harvested just 40 kg of maize, and have been surviving on a diet of wild fruits and banana tree roots. "No matter how efficient meteorological forecasts might be, their impact is likely to be limited if the message is inaccurately or improperly transmitted... accurate warnings will have little effect if the right forms of intervention are not made or if the population is so ill prepared that it is incapable of coping with the onset of drought, hail or whatever".**

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**Zimbabwe – about 10 km from Chidobe, another food-starved village queues for food. "Threats to food security are not solely a function of production failure at the household level, but also of institutional and policy failure. To that extent, household food insecurity and poverty cannot be seen as short-term crises but rather as the outcome of long-term trends resulting from the failure of government policy, and from the political orientation and priorities of those in power".**

education, welfare, labour etc.) they are typically addressed on a sectoral basis, without any consideration for the synergies of cross-sectoral planning and co-ordination.

There is also the added danger that the establishment of early warning systems can serve political ends as much as they serve as guides to famine prevention. In this respect it is noteworthy that most early warning systems are set up or revamped after a country has experienced a major drought. This is in part due to the availability of drought relief aid at the time (which is often targeted towards the establishment of warning systems), and in part to the government's attempts to reassure the general public that it has the situation under control and will not again be caught unawares. In such circumstances, the establishment of an early warning system may, in practice, prove to be a mandate for inaction, since equivalent attention is seldom paid to the primary determinants of famine and starvation; underdevelopment, household food insecurity, and vulnerability.

## Conclusion

By its very nature, the forecasting process tends to focus on the natural determinants of famine, and in so doing it distracts attention from the factors which shape societal and household vulnerability to famine, the majority of which are determined by human activity. That is to say, there is frequently a danger that forecasting can become an end in itself, detached from many of the social processes that give rise to hunger and starvation. Forecasting and early warning systems which focus on the impacts of the natural environment, for example, are not usually oriented to the new forms of food insecurity and vulnerability which emerged in the latter part of the twentieth century.

Historically, food insecurity and malnourishment have been viewed as problems which confront rural households. However, as a consequence of population growth, dwindling natural resources and failing agricultural production, increasing numbers of people are emigrating to the urban peripheries. Income generating opportunities in these urban areas are limited, and food insecurity and malnourishment are increasing amongst the burgeoning urban poor. Added to this is the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic which is sweeping the African continent and elsewhere in the developing world. This is leading to increased food insecurity and vulnerability, in both urban and rural communities, as household members succumb to the disease, and surviving members spend a large proportion, or all, of their income and savings on care for HIV/AIDS patients. The pandemic is also producing a generation of orphans whose survival at the margins of society is precarious and who face the constant threat of starvation. Clearly, other forms of forecasting and early warning are needed to predict the form and extent of these new threats to food security, and to develop appropriate measures to address them.

The arguments raised in this article, however, are not intended to dismiss the need either for forecasting or for early warning systems. The experiences of many drought prone countries, Australia amongst others, fully demonstrate how accurate forecasting can forewarn farmers of the onset of an El Niño event and allow them to adjust their ploughing and planting cycles to the eventuality of reduced or erratic rainfall. Rather, this discussion is an attempt to place these activities in a truer perspective and to highlight the need for closer collaboration between the natural and social sciences in the field of development. The existence of better forecasting and better early warning will facilitate the implementation of better anti-famine measures, but only if a range of other factors are met. Most obviously, the more food secure and less vulnerable communities are, the more effective will such systems be in preventing famine. ■

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1. Sen, A., 1981: *Poverty and Famines*. Oxford: Clarendon.

# Life sciences, biotechnology and world food shortage

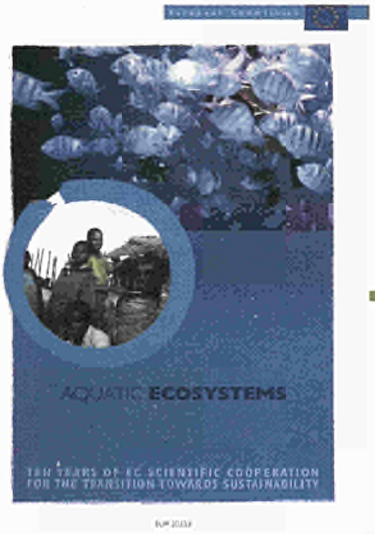
The European Community is working with the developing world to use scientific research to overcome their chronic shortfall in food production.

Gerasimos Apostolatos*

Since the early 1980s the European Community has been supporting research cooperation in the field of scientific and technological (S&T) development between institutions in the Member States and their counterparts in developing countries in Asia, Africa, the Mediterranean basin and Latin America.

This cooperation is part of the Community's wider international research and technological development cooperation programme. It covers research relating to sustainable crop, animal and fish production and food processing, human health and the sustainable management of natural resources in developing countries.

Between 1983 and 2002 more than 7,500 research teams, equally represented by the EU and the developing countries, took part in more than 2,700 projects. Most of those were relevant to aspects of food security. In 60 per cent of cases, projects would not have been possible without the financing of European scientific cooperation.




The role of S&T cooperation is irreplaceable in developing the knowledge to promote socio-economic development and global competitiveness. The global partnership covers not only research projects but also research fellowships for training and the organisation of workshops. This enables interaction and exchanges on regulatory and policy matters. The expertise gained contributes to better national strategies, plans, policies and processes for achieving sustainable development.

The evolution of scientific cooperation programmes between the EU and the developing countries made it easier to draw up a Community strategy, which was adopted by the Council in 1997. The plan was to use the various existing instruments in scientific policy and in development policy – funds for the Mediterranean area and Latin America, and the European Development Fund (EDF) – to promote research and technological development (RTD) as part of Community development policy. This paved the way for integrating research with development aid by involving the EDF. It is a model for future schemes bringing together RTD and foreign policy.

Since 1994 scientific cooperation agreements with specific emerging economies and industrialised nations have also given researchers from those countries the opportunity to take part in EU research projects. So far more than 20 scientific and technological cooperation agreements have been signed with third countries. The EU's external relations policies have already had an impact on S&T cooperation and this will undoubtedly be strengthened in the years to come.

In the Sixth Framework Programme, specific international cooperation activities cover food security, health systems and the management of natural resources. Sustainability and the "knowledge society" will be important parts of the new framework programme for research and technology development (FP6). The intention is to mobilise on a global scale the critical mass of expertise needed to achieve its ambitious objectives. The consolidation of the European Research Area in the years to come will create a vast intellectual, scientific and cultural "space", which the European Union is willing to share with other countries and regions for the benefit of sustainable and equitable development. ■

* Research Directorate-General International scientific cooperation projects

## Towards sustainable agriculture for developing countries: options from life sciences and biotechnologies

More than 600 delegates attended a two-day conference in Brussels at the end of January on the use of life sciences and biotechnologies to provide sustainable solutions to the problem of feeding people in developing countries.

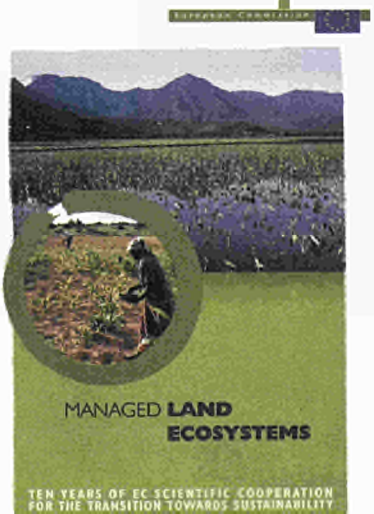
Overall food demand will grow rapidly in the coming decades, especially in the developing countries. The obvious answer is to increase cultivated areas. But the possibilities are limited by the need to preserve of the natural environment. So this can contribute no more than a fifth of the increase in global cereal production needed.

Therefore crop yields have to be increased. Technology offers a way forward. European public opinion is distrustful of genetically modified organisms in farming and food processing. But this is not the only area in which our increasing knowledge can contribute to soil and crop health, and to increasing yields.

These issues were keenly debated at the conference, which was opened by the Commissioner responsible for research, Philippe Busquin. He said that the EU was concerned that technological developments should be pursued within a proper environmental and social context. He stressed the importance of cooperation between the developed and developing worlds.

The Commissioner responsible for development, Poul Nielson, said that the life sciences were not "the panacea to solve the problems of the developing countries" but that they were, nevertheless, an important tool. The discussions highlighted the potential that the life sciences and biotechnologies have for developing countries. But they also made clear their possible risks and the need to ensure their effective and careful use.

*For more information:*
*http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/conferences/2003/sadc/index_en.html*



# Problems and paradoxes of food policies and hunger in Africa

In the last ten years, food security organisations have sounded the alarm over the paradoxical situation whereby in a world with a food surplus, people in many regions, particularly in Africa, do not have enough to eat. At the World Food Summit, convened by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 1996, 185 countries pledged to halve the number of undernourished people to 400 million by 2015. Seven years down the road we are still far short of the target. In light of the continued growth in population levels, especially in the poorest countries, what does the future hold in terms of food security?
**Jean B. Bakole**, international representative of COASAD*, shares his views on the issue.

IFAD/ Alberto Conti

Inequality of access to land is strongly linked to food insecurity. Most of the African rural population, and in particular women, have no land and very rarely receive help to improve their agricultural capacities

If nothing is done to reverse the trend, population growth in African countries will outstrip food supply. This is a theory that firmly belongs to the Malthusian approach to the food situation in Africa, but in reality the solution lies in new innovative strategies to deal with the endogenous and exogenous factors that threaten the food security of people[1]. In addition to the harmful effects of natural disasters and market liberalisation on agricultural development in Africa, the historical inequality of access to arable land, the ever-encroaching deserts, armed conflicts and the ineffectiveness of agricultural policies all constitute major obstacles to food security in Africa.

## Lack of access to land in rural areas: a problem rooted in history

The vast majority of Africans suffering from hunger and poverty – some 70% – live in rural areas. Before colonisation, great swathes of rural land were handed down to traditional chieftains who redistributed some of it among various families. In turn, all the members of the family or clan got a share of this land. In sedentary regions, as these families or clans swelled in number, this land was not enough to meet their agricultural and/or food needs.

This situation has not improved over the years, particularly as almost all arable land was taken over by colonists or new landowners obsessed with cash crops. Moreover, in some countries, arable land even lies idle. Such is the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where only one per cent of the 80 million hectares or so of arable land is farmed, equalling on average 0.8 hectare per family. This makes the DRC one of a number of African countries that have not developed a sufficient agricultural production capacity to feed a rural or suburban family of four to six children.

Thus, most of the African rural population, and in particular women, have no land and very rarely receive help to improve their agricultural capacities. Not owning any land themselves, these people are highly dependent on those who do and often have to resort to subsistence agriculture which does not earn them enough to cover their own basic needs.

But very few African countries have embarked on a sound course of agricultural reform with the aim of, first, making optimum use of all the arable land, with a fair redistribution among

***The Coalition of African Organisations for Food Security and Sustainable Development (COASAD), based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, is a pan-African platform whose members include NGOs, rural peoples' organisations and other civil society organisations which are active at various levels in the areas of food security, nutrition, trade and sustainable development.**
**COASAD is an independent, non-profit-making, non-governmental organisation whose goal is the attainment of sustainable food security for all African people.**

the people and, secondly, achieving a better balance between food-producing crops and crops for export. In fact, over the last few decades the gap between these two types of crops has actually widened considerably, owing in particular to the policies adopted by many African governments who have prioritised cash crops at the expense of small farmers.

## Free trade – still huge obstacles to be overcome

Since the early 1980s, with the implementation of structural adjustment programmes and agricultural free-trade agreements, African countries have been forced to lift controls on trade in the areas of agriculture and food. Paradoxically, although the trade arrangements were meant to be reciprocal under the terms of these agreements, developed countries have not removed tariff barriers, sidelining African products on the world market.

Aside from the recent and encouraging "Everything But Arms" initiative launched by the European Union in 2001, which guarantees unlimited access to the European market for all goods (with the exception of arms and munitions) from LDCs (least developed countries), the fact remains that in the case of almost all African exports the benefits have barely outweighed the negative effects of food imports on the development of agriculture in these countries. The dumping, at extremely low prices, of food from agricultural surplus on the African market has systematically driven down the prices of local produce and bankrupted many rural small-holdings.

This situation has exacerbated the rural exodus to the point where many African towns have been turned into large agglomerations of villages where rural people sink even further into the depths of poverty and where their future in terms of employment is at the very least uncertain. If all the EU's trade measures concerning LDCs were fully implemented by 2009 and if all the other trading powers were to remove tariff barriers to African exports – even though this alone is not enough to guarantee agricultural development in African countries – there is no doubt that African countries would benefit a lot more from trade liberalisation.

## Conflict: food as a weapon

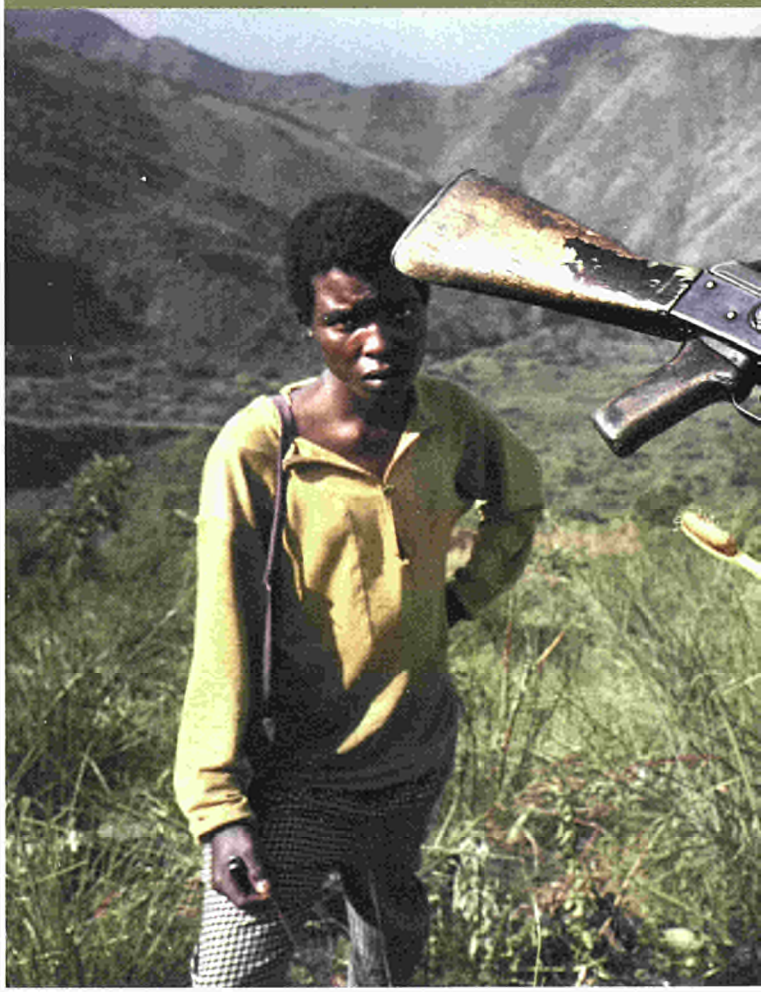
There have been many deaths from famine all over Africa, but the situation is clearly exacerbated in areas where there is war. In the major conflict areas such as the Great Lakes (DRC, Burundi and Rwanda), Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Somalia and Ethiopia, chronic malnutrition is rife (less than 2,300 calories per person per day) and food is scarce all year round. In addition to the structural causes, these food crises are exacerbated further by armed conflict because of the huge loss of life, the destruction of production and trade networks and the general socio-economic destabilisation that ensues. In war-torn countries, as elsewhere in Africa, food security depends first and foremost on the country's own food production levels, supplied by rural farmers who make up an estimated 70% of the entire population in Africa.

Over the past twenty years, war and conflict in many African countries has triggered a massive exodus of more than 25 million people, causing people to flee either within their own country or to another. Under such circumstances, the production cycle on rural and family farms has been profoundly disrupted, since the people have been forced to flee the fighting or can no longer farm certain tracts of land that the warring factions have rigged with land mines[2]. Despite this, many African leaders still become engaged in hostilities – abandoning their people to starvation – to the point where some believe that food insecurity is poised to become both a military weapon and a political tool in Africa.

## Alternatives to the chaotic food situation

In spite of all these external factors, strategists cannot agree on how to attain widespread food security in Africa. Some believe food aid policies should be prioritised while others advocate increased agricultural investment to boost local productivity. Certainly, food aid is needed to provide relief in the

**Armed conflicts are a significant cause of deteriorating food scenarios in developing countries.**



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very short term for people in emergency situations, for example in the case of war or natural disasters. However in other cases, food aid has not only created a situation of dependency but has also led to a decline in African agriculture. Furthermore, there is growing controversy surrounding Africa-bound food aid stocks which contain GMOs (genetically modified organisms). To date, no scientific study guaranteeing that these products pose no threat to human health has received unanimous agreement at world level. Paradoxically, while the distribution of GM food is a highly controversial issue, some African countries have been developing GM food of their own - both to provide a solution to food shortages and to increase food production. Even if GM foods are proved to be entirely harmless, it goes without saying that this new agricultural trend will not solve Africa's food problems. After all, it was the dream of the "green revolution" – of which the scars have yet to heal – that led many African leaders to sit back and do nothing rather than implement multi-faceted agricultural policies with solid local foundations.

However, despite these obstacles to food security in Africa, a number of African governments have made considerable provision for hunger and poverty alleviation in their national development policies. Once such example is Benin, a model sub-Saharan country in which food security is largely ensured by a stable political environment and the absence of war, and where agriculture is the driving force behind national economic development. Based on this example, it is safe to say that it is the responsibility of governments to create democratic institutions that guarantee the participation of all national players, and particularly women, in the design and implementation of national development policies so that the fight against hunger truly becomes a priority. In this regard, Professor Amartya Sen has made an interesting point: "One of the most remarkable facts about the awful history of hunger is that there has never been a serious famine in a country with a democratic government" [3]. ■

1. BAKOLE B.J."The food security imperative" *in Multinational Monitor*, January/February, 1999, p.27.
2. BAKOLE B.J.,"Armed conflict and food insecurity in Africa", in *Notes from the Regional Workshop of English-speaking African parliamentary representatives on food security in Africa*, published by COASAD, Nairobi, 2002, p.4.
3. *El Pais*, Madrid, 16 October 1998.

## Forthcoming events

- 2nd General Meeting and the 2nd Pan-African Conference on Food Security, Trade and Sustainable Development in Africa, 14-16 April 2003, Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania)
- Regional workshop of African journalists from French- and Portuguese-speaking countries on food security in Africa, 3-5 September 2003, Cotonou (Benin).

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# New and old links

## between agriculture and food security

At its most basic, food security is defined as the access of all people to the food needed for a healthy life at all times. Yet today 890 million people – nearly 15 per cent of humanity – live in food insecurity, with no chance for active and healthy lives. And that is a conservative estimate by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO). A thriving and sustainable agriculture could lift millions of these people out of abject poverty and into food security. In turn, food-secure rural populations could strengthen agriculture and ensure that it is socially and environmentally sustainable. By exploiting the myriad links between agriculture and food security, developing countries, aid donors, and non-governmental organisations can help achieve the seemingly elusive goals of the World Food Summit, and even go beyond them.

Joachim von Braun*



The well-known old links between agriculture and food security relate to food supply and availability and growth linkages. The new, not-so-well recognised links relate to the impact that agriculture and the environment have on each other and to the diet and health aspects of food security. The lives of hundreds of millions of poor people depend on how these links play out.

Food security depends on the availability of food, people's access to food, and the quality of food they consume. Poverty is the underlying force leading to a negative outcome in these areas. But agriculture can play a crucial role in ensuring an economically and ethically positive outcome. Vigorous and sustainable agricultural production employing effective technologies raises yields and lowers food prices – given well-functioning markets – thereby improving the availability of food. When rural people move beyond subsistence farming, they increase the amount of food available to themselves and to other consumers in the marketplace, and thus help lower food prices.

### A strong agricultural sector is vital

People's access to the food available in markets depends largely on their income, and when food prices rise, the poor can lose access quickly. Agriculture is key to raising incomes in developing countries. Seventy-five per cent of the world's poor people live in rural areas, so agriculture and agriculture-related employment are major sources of income for them. Unproductive agriculture, however, has left millions of rural people in poverty.

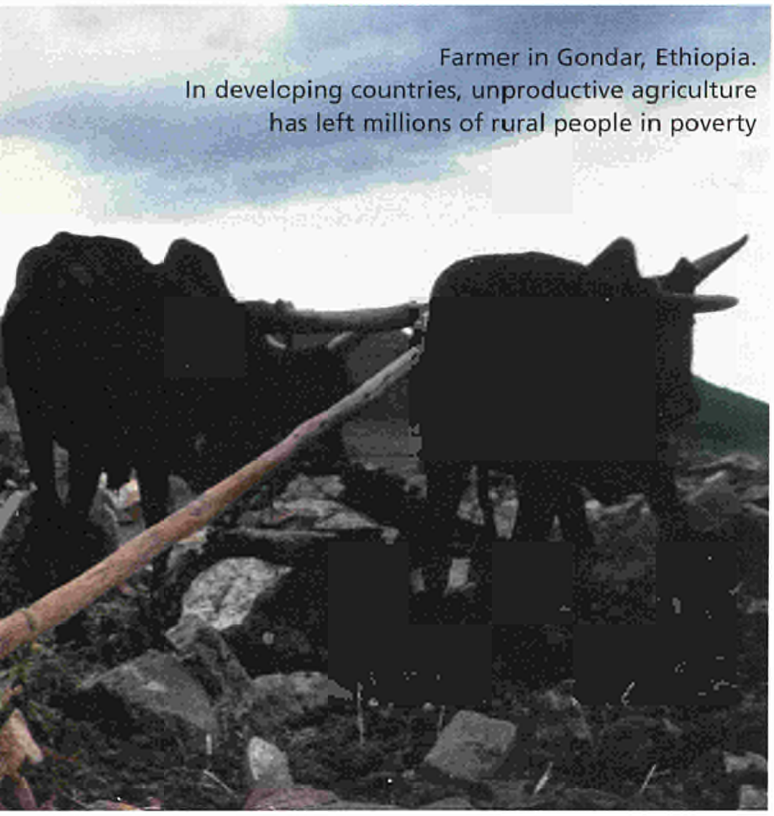
Because of its importance to developing-country economies, agriculture can also accelerate growth and lead to jobs and rising incomes in the rest of the economy. If this growth is managed in ways that benefit the poor, it can make a sizable dent in food insecurity in both rural and urban areas.

Finally, a strong agricultural sector can help raise the quality of food consumed, partly by raising people's incomes. Good nutrition depends on getting not only enough calories but also enough nutrients, but poor people whose diets largely consist of staple foods like rice or maize often suffer from serious deficiencies of iron, zinc, vitamin A, and other micronutrients. As people's incomes rise, they can afford to consume more non-staple foods, especially meat, which can supply them with missing nutrients. In addition, new research and advances in biotechnology show that bio-fortified staple foods – such as rice varieties fortified with vitamin A – offer promise for improving the nutritional status of poor people who depend on these staples. By improving people's nutrition, these varieties could help increase their productivity and thus potentially raise their incomes.

### Virtuous circle

Food security also supports agriculture in important ways. Food security improves people's health and physical and mental development, making them more productive workers in any sector, including agriculture. Undernutrition, however, results in substantial productivity losses through, for example, high levels of illness and impaired cognitive development. Healthy and energetic people are essential to agricultural and overall economic growth.

Assured food security also reduces infant and maternal mortality and stabilises people's lives, diminishing the need to have large



Farmer in Gondar, Ethiopia. In developing countries, unproductive agriculture has left millions of rural people in poverty

families as a form of old-age support. It can thus contribute to slowing population growth, thereby putting less pressure on the environment for food production. It helps eliminate the need for rural people to migrate in search of new land for farming and thus reduces the likelihood that desperate farmers will deforest or degrade ever-widening swathes of land. Food security and agricultural development may reduce migration not just to other rural areas, but also to urban areas, reducing sprawl and overcrowding.

## Prerequisites

Improved food security and vigorous agricultural growth can mutually reinforce one another only if policies are in place to support this "virtuous circle." Policymakers must ensure that farmers have the technologies they need, that markets function well, that poor people have access to health and nutrition services, and that good governance eliminates violent conflict and creates an environment conducive to agricultural growth and food security.

Arable land is scarce worldwide, so agricultural growth will require farmers to produce more crops on the same amount of land. For this intensification of agriculture to be sustainable, farmers need access to appropriate technologies, such as irrigation and improved seeds, as well as to other practices for managing natural resources. As yield growth begins to decline for many food staples, agricultural research to generate new technologies is more important than ever. To promote food security, agricultural technologies must be made available to poor smallholders and women farmers, who have often been left behind by technological advances. National governments and international aid agencies must support agricultural research that serves the needs of poor developing-country farmers and strengthen extension systems that can deliver technologies to these farmers, including smallholders and women.

Well-functioning markets are also essential for a thriving agricultural sector and a food-secure population. If farmers are to translate increased productivity into increased income, they need domestic markets for their products, the ability to reach them via good road and transport systems, and market access in industrialised countries. They also require markets where they can obtain inputs like seeds and fertiliser.

To strengthen agriculture and improve food security, public investment is essential in services such as healthcare, education, and nutrition programmes to help build human capital. IFPRI research has shown that education, especially of girls and women, significantly reduces malnutrition by enabling them to earn higher incomes, even in agriculture, thereby enhancing household food security. Female education also improves the quality of care women give to their children, helping to form a healthier and better-nourished next generation.

Finally, agricultural growth and food security rely heavily on the existence of good governance – that is, the rule of law, transparency, elimination of corruption, sound public administration, and respect for human rights. In this case, good governance need not necessarily be limited to democratic institutions. The key is how well a national government provides all of its citizens with basic public goods, such as internal peace and public investment in infrastructure and research. In regions where hunger is rising, such as in parts of rural sub-Saharan Africa, national governments are failing to provide enough of the most basic public goods needed for income growth and food security. Where governments have fulfilled this role, they have also managed to significantly reduce hunger.

It is essential to mention one major hindrance to the smooth mutual support that agriculture and food security can offer to each other: HIV/AIDS. The disease is now an enormous economic problem as well as a human tragedy, especially in Africa. It has killed millions of productive farmers and other workers, leading to hunger and malnutrition on a massive scale. HIV/AIDS can accelerate the adverse cycle of disease and food insecurity. Poverty and hunger may cause people to adopt livelihoods that increase HIV risks, such as migration in search of work, and malnutrition can hasten the onset of full-blown AIDS. HIV/AIDS then may worsen food insecurity by striking young adults at their most productive time of life, leaving children and the elderly to fend for themselves. Agriculture, which is highly labour intensive in poor countries, has been hard hit. Like other sectors, agriculture must adapt to the reality of HIV/AIDS. For example, agricultural researchers need to develop farming practices that require less labour while maintaining productivity.

Policymakers and development practitioners can foster the positive links between agriculture and food security to their advantage, using them to create a world where all people have access to enough food, sustainably produced, to lead full and healthy lives. ■

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# World hunger and the OECD

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is an economically powerful group of 30 of the world's richer countries. Its policies inevitably have a profound impact on the developing world.
In this interview, **Stefan Tangermann**, Director of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries at the OECD, answers the *Courier*'s questions about the links between food production, poverty and world trade.

**Eyoum Ngangué**

*Throughout the world more than 800 million people live in food insecurity, mostly in the developing countries. At the same time agriculture in the OECD countries generates surpluses of food. How can you explain this paradox?*

Hunger is not a problem that is caused by a lack of physical availability of food. Hunger is directly related to poverty, and arises primarily when people are so poor that they can't buy enough food. Therefore, producing surpluses of food in developed countries is not the way to overcome hunger in developing countries, because these surpluses simply cannot be bought by poor developing countries – it does nothing to eradicate the root cause of hunger.

*The policy in OECD countries of providing agricultural subsidies to their own farmers seems to have negative consequences for food security in the developing world. How can we prevent this situation getting worse?*

This is a very important question. We must keep in mind that a very large part of the poor in developing countries live in agricultural areas and therefore their livelihoods depend either directly or indirectly on agriculture. Now, is there a link between the economic importance of agriculture in developing countries and the situation in OECD countries? Yes, there is a direct link, because the agricultural policies of OECD countries have effects on international trade – in particular by depressing world market prices for agriculture products. If a developing country produces agricultural products and can export these products to world markets, and then finds that it can sell them only at a low price, that of course does not help that country to overcome poverty.

*Trade liberalisation in the OECD countries is having a similar negative impact. What can be done about this?*

First of all, it is true that those developing countries that depend on food imports may be negatively affected by trade liberalisation, because food prices may rise relative to what they would otherwise be. However, we must not overestimate the magnitude of these effects. We have in OECD undertaken an analysis of the impacts of OECD liberalisation on the welfare of food importing countries, and on food security for these countries, and we find that they are relatively small.

*How do you view the claim by poor countries that they have the right to get access to rich countries' markets?*

It is absolutely necessary for developing countries to get better access to those markets, and to be able to sell products which they

**Guyana.**
**At the weekly Saturday market in the village of Leonora women buy and sell tomatoes, hot red pepper and chives.**

**A very large part of the poor in developing countries live in agricultural areas and therefore their livelihoods depend either directly or indirectly on agriculture.**

IFAD/Horst Wagner

can produce at a comparative advantage. In many cases these are agricultural products, so allowing developing countries better access to the agricultural markets of the industrialised countries is one particularly useful way in which OECD countries can help the developing countries overcome their poverty problems.

*Are there any aid or development programmes that could enable the countries of the South to increase the productivity of their agriculture?*

That is one of the development steps that we would certainly want to support, although I must stress that the OECD is not engaged in development assistance, but rather in appropriate policy-making. We are also in the business of looking directly into the effects that policies in the OECD countries have in developing countries all the way down to the level of individual families in developing countries. The OECD deals with economic and social policies, and the strategy for development policies in the OECD countries. But it does not, like the World Bank or the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, engage in direct technical assistance or capital transfer projects.

What it can do is help the governments of OECD member countries to understand better the implications of their policies for developing countries, and in particular make sure that there is coherence across the various policy areas, in particular between the agricultural policies that the OECD countries pursue and their development assistance programmes. In a number of cases, the government of an OECD country helps a developing country to improve production conditions for a given agricultural product through development assistance, and then this same country undoes the benefit by dumping surpluses on the international market of that very product in a way that makes it difficult for the developing country to sell to that same market or even continue producing this product.

So what we really need is better policy coherence and the OECD is very much in the business of explaining that to the governments of its member countries.

*What is the OECD's position on the equitable trade of agricultural and food products?*

OECD member countries are aware, from analytical studies that the OECD secretariat has provided, that their policies should be reformed both in the domestic interest of the OECD countries and in the interest of better functioning international trade. And if OECD countries reform their policies and reduce the level of protection and support, that would help level the playing field in international trade between themselves and the developing countries, most of whom do not have the means to support their agriculture to anything like the same extent as the OECD countries.

*Fishing is a way of combating food insecurity. But although the poor countries have waters full of fish, it is the countries of the North that are exploiting them. Do you see a solution to this problem?*

There are different types of arrangements for fishing in international waters. In some cases, where we talk about the high seas – outside the 200-mile zones – we are not talking about any particular country's property rights, but about international regulations and the proper management of fish stocks in the global interest. When we talk about fishing within national zones, within the 200-mile zones, we typically talk about contractual arrangements that exist between the countries with jurisdiction over these zones and other countries who go there to fish. In many cases compensation is paid for that, or there is an exchange of fishing rights in each other's waters, so it is not as if this happens without any form of agreement. I cannot simply come with my ship and fish in your waters without you having agreed to it.

*OECD countries generally disapprove of the ACP-EU trade preferences on the grounds that they go against the complete trade liberalisation of agricultural products. But these agreements do allow many ACP countries to protect their agriculture…*

Nobody is really talking about a complete liberalisation of international trade in agriculture, but what is trying to be achieved in international negotiations in Geneva is a further reduction of the levels of protection and support. The European Union does not want to push this process further very rapidly, but is nevertheless in the process of formulating its negotiating proposal for the Geneva negotiations on agriculture trade. Even though that proposal may not at first glance look very generous, we must not forget that it is much different from the one tabled at the beginning of the last round of international trade negotiations on agriculture – the Uruguay round in the second half of the 1980s. The specific benefits that the EU provides to exports from ACP countries are unlikely to be eliminated.

*The governments of poor countries must take some responsibility for the food shortages that their peoples have to endure. Does the OECD have the means to put pressure on them to make the eradication of hunger their priority?*

It's absolutely right that in order to overcome the poverty and hunger problem, a lot of things also have to happen in the developing countries. In its policy dialogue with its partners in the third world, the OECD countries should certainly place a lot of emphasis on improving the situation in poverty stricken parts of these economies. I think that jointly, the developing countries and the OECD countries must reconsider their strategy towards development, which has in recent years placed insufficient emphasis on agricultural development. The FAO has shown very directly how the share of assistance to agriculture in overall development assistance has gone down in recent years. They also show how the share of agriculture in the domestic investment in developing countries has gone down. So it's for both governments in the developing countries and in the OECD countries to reconsider their approach and pay more attention to agricultural development. ■

# Food trade and food security

International trade in foodstuffs has increased rapidly in the last 50 years, chiefly as a result of successive rounds of trade liberalisation. Between 1968 and 1998, international trade in major crops such as cereals, vegetables, vegetable oils, fruit, meat and milk increased twice as fast as production. There is little evidence that international trade in foodstuffs has contributed to food security for millions of the poor. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) says that the expansion in the volume of trade "has been accompanied by declining terms of trade for the products of developing countries, which have eroded possible gains considerably"[1].

John Madeley*

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) is gearing up for a ministerial meeting in Mexico this September that could further liberalise and increase trade in agricultural produce. This would mean that developing countries would export even more food to Western countries. The wisdom of this trade is not sufficiently challenged. Food could be more beneficial for the poor if it stayed at home rather than being exported.

A snapshot of trade in foodstuffs is revealing. Around 260 million people in India are today food insecure, but the country has become the world's second largest rice exporter and wants to export more.

A rapid expansion in rice exports from Vietnam has helped farmers in the country's major rice growing areas, but done little or nothing to reduce poverty in Vietnam overall. Almost a third of the population live below the poverty line.

Better-off developing countries are also affected. Argentina's food exports rose from $892 million in 1991 to $2,358 in 2001, making it the world's fourth largest exporter of food. The percentage of people living in poverty in Argentina just happens to have risen in the last decade at a rather similar rate to the growth in food exports, from just under 20 per cent in 1991 to around 50 per cent today. There are many factors behind the rise in poverty, but exporting food has barely helped Argentina's hungry.

Some famine-affected African countries are exporting food. Ethiopia and Malawi are exporting vegetables, while Mozambique sells fish on the world market.

Land in poor countries is being used to grow food for people in rich countries who can afford it – unlike those who are food insecure.

Western country governments and most academics, even some Northern-based NGOs, support exports of food from food insecure countries, citing the theory of comparative advantage. But this has proved inadequate for meeting the needs of the poor. The foreign exchange that developing countries earn from exporting food is often not used for tackling hunger.

An examination of trade liberalisation is again revealing; recent studies overwhelmingly show its detrimental impact on food security. In a synthesis of case studies of 16 countries, for example, the FAO found that trade liberalisation has led to a surge of food imports into the 16 countries but not to an increase in their exports. This is forcing local farmers out of business and into the urban areas, and leading to a concentration of farm holdings. "There was a remarkably similar experience with import surges in particular products in the post-Uruguay Round period (after 1995)", says the study, "a common reported concern was with a general trend towards the concentration of farms, in a wide cross-section of countries which has marginalised small producers and added to unemployment and poverty"[2].

Many developing countries have gone through 20 years of intense trade liberalisation but hunger remains a problem in many. The destruction of small farmer livelihoods, and the concentration of small farms into large ones, is hardly conducive to sustainable livelihoods. There is little evidence that other economic sectors are providing jobs for those who lose their employment on the land.

## Unfavourable terms of trade

Trade could help farmers in developing countries if they obtained good prices for the crops they grow for export. In practice, prices tend to be low and unstable, and, even when they rise, the farmers may see little benefit. The benefits of liberalisation to low-income agricultural producers "are likely to be very limited", says a UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report[3].

Research at the US-based Food First organisation shows that global trade in food has destroyed "the ability of farmers to grow food for their families and communities", says the organisation's co-director Anuradha Mittal. Southern-based NGOs, such as the peasant farmer grouping Via Campesina, the Movement of the Landless in Brazil, and the Phillipines-based Focus on the Global South, are increasingly pointing out that trade in food is not helping food security.

Western-country farm subsidies do not help. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries give their farmers over $300 billion a year in subsidies. This leads to farmers in OECD countries producing more food than they would under market conditions. Some of the additional produce is dumped – sold below the cost of production – in developing countries. This depresses prices and makes it difficult for their farmers to compete. As a result, many have been driven off the land.

### World Food Production and Trade, 1968-1998

| | Production (m. tonnes) | | | International Trade (m. tonnes) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1968 | 1998 | % increase | 1968 | 1998 | % increase |
| Cereals | 1064.6 | 1883.7 | 76.9 | 106.3 | 271.7 | 155.6 |
| Vegetables | 251.1 | 625.1 | 148.9 | 8.7 | 38.1 | 337.9 |
| Vegetable oil | 25.0 | 86.2 | 244.8 | 5.1 | 36.8 | 621.6 |
| Fruit | 223.8 | 430.9 | 92.5 | 21.8 | 81.3 | 272.9 |
| Meat | 94.8 | 222.4 | 134.6 | 5.6 | 23.0 | 310.7 |
| Milk | 389.5 | 557.0 | 43.0 | 25.4 | 69.2 | 172.4 |

*Note: the trade figures are based on data for exports.*
*Source: FAO Food Balance Sheet Database, 2001.*

If the EU's Common Agricultural Policy is scrapped or substantially reformed, this would help to reduce dumping. It could also open the doors wider to agricultural produce from developing countries. But this would not result in the gain it seems. Developing countries might earn more foreign exchange, but the benefits seem unlikely to trickle down to food insecure farmers. It would lead to more land under export crops.

Farmers do not trade on the world market. They sell their goods to dealers who sell them to international traders; almost 70 per cent of world trade is between transnational corporations, according to UNCTAD. Opening up markets may seem to have attractions, but, in practice, the gains would go to the trading corporations rather than to the food insecure.

IFAD/Robert Grossman

One "pro-poor" approach to food security is to build on the successful, sustainable agriculture already used by some farmers. Some remarkable achievements are now being seen, with food security increasing for reasons which have nothing to do with international trade. Impressive gains are being achieved by small farmers in Madagascar using a new technique of growing rice. Yields shot up without either chemical fertilisers, pesticides or expensive seed varieties.

## Three "pro-poor" approaches

To benefit the poor, three approaches seem to called for. The first is to build on the successful, sustainable agriculture already used by some farmers. Some remarkable achievements are now being seen, with food security increasing for reasons which have nothing to do with international trade.

A database compiled at the UK's University of Essex, for example, contains information on over 200 examples of sustainable agriculture, covering communities in 52 developing countries. In many of the initiatives, crop yields have more than doubled.

One of the most impressive gains was achieved by small farmers in Madagascar after they employed a new technique of growing rice. Yields of around two tonnes per hectare shot up to around 8 to 10 tonnes per hectare, without either chemical fertilisers, pesticides or expensive seed varieties, and by breaking some of the conventional "rules" of rice management.

The technique, known as the System of Rice Intensification (SRI), was developed by an agronomist priest, Henri de Laudanié, working with a small farmers' group, Association Tefy Saina. Traditionally, rice is transplanted into fields at around eight weeks. With SRI, seedlings are transplanted at around six days and planted individually, enabling farmers to use less seed. Using their own seed, some 20,000 farmers have now adopted the method in Madagascar and SRI has spread to other countries.

In Ghana, in another initiative listed in the database, farmers have been able to exploit new market opportunities for cassava thanks to an aggressive cassava research and market promotion programme based on high yielding varieties adapted to local climatic and soil conditions. Between 1990 and 1998, "annual consumption of cassava in Ghana increased from 126 kg to 232 kg per capita".

Development aid could usefully help to replicate these types of successful practice.

## Trade on fair terms

Secondly, there is a need to take a serious look at an alternative trading system. Trade can help the food insecure, but only if it takes place on fair terms. There is huge potential in the alternative, small at present, but rapidly growing Fairtrade system. Fairly-traded products now include coffee, tea, cocoa, chocolate, honey, sugar, fruit juice, mangoes, bananas, rice and spices, and non-food goods such as clothes and footballs.

Sales of Fairly-traded coffee in the UK have increased by around 50 per cent a year in the last five years. Five per cent of all coffee growers are now selling through this system and receiving 126 cents a lb (for arabica coffee) compared with the world price in February this year of around 65 cents a lb. The importance of this is not only price, it also lies in strengthening the position of local producers.

Thirdly, a great deal more attention and priority needs to go to developing an economic system that places the hungry centre stage. Nobel laureate Amartya Sen gave the world the theory of 'entitlements', arguing that famine results from the working of the economic system in allocating the ability of people to acquire goods.

Governments and the international community have not developed a practical economic system that would give the poor entitlements to food. A probing of the role of trade would be part of that reconsideration.

At the World Food Summit in 1996, governments unanimously committed themselves to halving the number of hungry people by 2015, as a "first step to food for all". The target is behind schedule. But the goal of food for all remains, and is one that the international community should pursue with greater determination. It is well to remember that food is a fundamental human right, and that trade is but a means to an end. ■

* Author of *Food for All: the need for a new agriculture*, published by Zed Books.

1. FAO paper "Food and international trade", Rome 1996.
2. Synthesis of Case Studies, X3065/E, FAO, Rome: 1999. Presented to an FAO Symposium, "Trade and Food Security", September 1999.
   The 16 countries were Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Egypt, Fiji, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Morocco, Pakistan, Peru, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Thailand.
3. "Globalization and Liberalization", UNCTAD, Geneva 1996.

# From food aid to food security:

## linking relief and development starts with addressing food insecurity

Helping people out of poverty towards sustainable development is crucial in environments dominated by crisis and conflict. To be effective, aid agencies and donors should overcome the division between traditional development assistance and humanitarian relief by breaking down intellectual, institutional and financial barriers. Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) is the latest approach to achieving context-oriented assistance during and in the aftermath of crises, which is ruled by the needs of the local populations and overcomes the fragmentation of aid efforts.

**Gerhard Schmalbruch***

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) classifies 800 million people worldwide as 'extreme' food insecure – a statistic that seriously challenges the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Despite the focus of poverty reduction strategies on reducing structural deficits and creating fair economic North-South relations, reducing hunger and malnutrition by half by 2015 – a precondition for real poverty reduction – will be impossible if concrete steps are not taken to help disaster victims become food secure.

In most crisis situations, food aid plays a major role in the survival of victims of natural catastrophes, manmade disasters and – most commonly – the combination of both. Most crises occur in rural areas, affecting highly vulnerable groups whose income derives mainly from small-scale (subsistence) agriculture. This means that even in the "simplest" case of drought or flooding, not only must a nutritional shortage be "repaired", but livelihoods also have to be rebuilt completely. Droughts in southern and east Africa, as well as the long ongoing humanitarian catastrophes in the Sudan, Angola, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan, not to mention starvation in North Korea, typically exemplify how natural events, coupled with mismanagement of the agricultural sector and the economy as a whole, can lead whole populations into complex emergencies. Together with the necessary political framework of peace, democracy and regional stability, a suitable comprehensive aid approach is needed in order to break these vicious cycles.

### The challenges of LLRD

NGOs had been attempting to link humanitarian and food aid with agricultural recovery and developmental activities long before LRRD became an issue. The interests and demands of their local target groups, which naturally called for context-oriented aid, had always suggested this. However, the fragmentation of available funding for humanitarian aid and developmental assistance has resulted in both approaches falling short of conceptual, as well as financial needs. Whereas private donors have tended to react more avidly to media images of immediate suffering, institutional donors traditionally divided their funding conceptually into short-term humanitarian aid, versus long-term development assistance. Humanitarian aid is ideally based on humanitarian principles aiming at access, neutrality and independence, while development assistance seeks coherence with national and regional development strategies, including nowadays with foreign policy goals. These two concepts cannot easily be combined and may even be contradictory when it comes to cooperation with governmental structures and the application of global development plans such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) of the World Bank or the country strategy papers (CSP) of the EC. This dilemma constitutes the principal challenge in LRRD.

Almost immediately after the EC separated humanitarian assistance from the Development Directorate, with the creation of its humanitarian aid office ECHO in 1992, a discussion about the so-called 'grey zone' between humanitarian assistance and development started. This grey zone generated constant problems and contradictions at field level and challenged the mandates of both short-term humanitarian and long-term development assistance. The creation of different departments of aid agencies and NGOs, specialising in one or the other and reflecting both 'types' of assistance, further cemented the split. However, the reality of complex emergencies proved that distinguishing between (abnormal) emergency and (normal) development assistance and their respective intervention mechanisms, did not result in efficient context-oriented aid. Complex emergencies became increasingly common after the end of the cold war, but the theoretical sequencing of instruments, as first suggested by the academic continuum approach, proved inadequate in long-term complex crisis situations. The latter is in fact characterised by the simultaneous existence of all types of aid mechanisms and the recurrence of crisis situations. This reality was illustrated by war-torn Mozambique where, at the beginning of the 1990s, a multitude of

Maria Olsen/ECHO

**Queuing for supplementary feedeing for children in Angola,in a project run by MSF (Doctors without borders) and funded by ECHO.**
**To be effective, aid agencies and donors should overcome the division between traditional development assistance and humanitarian relief. Access to food is not only a basic element of survival, but it is also the foundation for rebuilding livelihoods and therefore paramount for regional stability.**

François Goemans/ECHO

**Agricultural project in Bandundu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.**
**To achieve sustainable rehabilitation and development of a country or region, it is vital that local economies and production are supported and dependency is avoided, also in the relief phase. Local and regional purchases therefore play a specific and important role in LRRD.**

interventions coexisted and contradicted each other, including World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programmes, bilateral economic aid and investment projects, development oriented NGO solidarity actions and heavy humanitarian interventions of UN, Red Cross and humanitarian NGOs. 'Linear' development (already problematic in a purely developmental context) was not achievable at all.

Food aid and food security projects are largely present throughout the entire cycle of a crisis. Access to food is not only a basic element of survival, but it is also the foundation for rebuilding livelihoods and therefore paramount for regional stability. The Council Regulation 1292/96 on food-aid policy and food-aid management and special operations in support of food security has tried to turn the Food Aid/Food Security programme, currently managed by unit F5 in AIDCO (the European Commission office responsible for implementing external aid), into a flexible instrument. A recent evaluation (2001) has rightly put the emphasis on the specific needs of LRRD.

Nevertheless EuronAid and its operational partners, comprising Northern and Southern NGOs equally, still encounter diverse bottlenecks in the implementation of a coherent LRRD approach with the EC. These include the limitation of funds available for NGOs, a long and inadequate Call for Proposals system for project applications that does not achieve continuity and moreover does not correspond with agricultural cycles, the lack of flexibility in the financial rules, not to mention a difficult conceptualisation of EC aid management (e.g. between centralised management, deconcentration and decentralisation). The differences in the approaches of the international donor community as a whole also add to the challenge posed by the multiplication of crises. Additional resources to invest in food security, as a pillar for social cohesion, would more than likely reduce vulnerability to political instability, which in many parts of the world goes hand in hand with hunger and starvation.

## Avoiding dependency

To achieve sustainable rehabilitation and development of a country or region, it is vital that local economies and production are supported and dependency is avoided, also in the relief phase. Local and regional purchases therefore play a specific and important role in LRRD. As demanded for a long time by EuronAid, nowadays the European Commission allows more and more regional and local purchases of food aid, including agricultural inputs. The advantages are clear: from the aid point of view, the acceptance and feasibility of the product is increased as it complies better with local nutritional habits and customs; from the developmental point of view, market distortions caused by competition with subsidised goods are avoided, and both local and regional production and trade are supported. In 2001 and 2002 EuronAid procured more than 80 per cent of its products for the NGO food aid programme regionally and locally. Furthermore, more than 60 per cent of all purchases for the total food aid commodity programme of the EC are undertaken on the world market, as opposed to the European market – a positive trend that is on the increase.

EuronAid sees the ongoing dialogue on LRRD among NGOs and in the EC as a very constructive step towards achieving a coherent needs-orientated assistance, which can reduce the vulnerability of populations and in so doing, contribute to poverty reduction. Civil society organisations are especially suited to working in this domain since they promote the indispensable integration of local communities and local civil society in humanitarian aid as well as in development strategies. This empowerment of local initiatives and structures constitutes the most important way to link humanitarian action, which necessarily has a strong aspect of external intervention, with development activities owned fully by the local actors.

The challenge ahead has to be seen from the perspective of those in need. It is of no use to them if LRRD is considered as one more academic or conceptual category where the aid is put in and NGOs are instrumentalised, and where development should result. To break the cycle of world poverty, which truly is the overarching global crisis, aid instruments must not only be used in a flexible and efficient manner, but they must also be managed as close as possible to those in need. Since access to food constitutes the very core of poverty reduction, and in many crises food aid is an integral part of establishing food security, both are essential for ensuring linkages between short-term humanitarian and long-term development goals. Aid instruments must be linked through the adoption of a continuum approach and must clearly respond to their context, whether it is called humanitarian, rehabilitation or development. NGOs, as representatives of civil society, illustrate a practical partnership based on solidarity between North and South, and are especially equipped to take up this challenge, using a united approach to focus on the social problems to be addressed. ■

* Secretary General of EuronAid, the European Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) active in food security and food aid programmes.

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# HIV/AIDS has changed the world:

## food insecurity and disease – what we need to know

It is slightly over 20 years since the first cases of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) were identified. During this period science has successfully identified not only the virus – Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV – and in particular HIV-1 sub-type M) that causes AIDS but also now understands many of the stages in transmission. Quite naturally with an infection which is predominantly sexually, and in fact heterosexually, transmitted, there is a socio-economic impact as it makes ill and finally kills people in the prime producing age groups.

Tony Barnett[1]

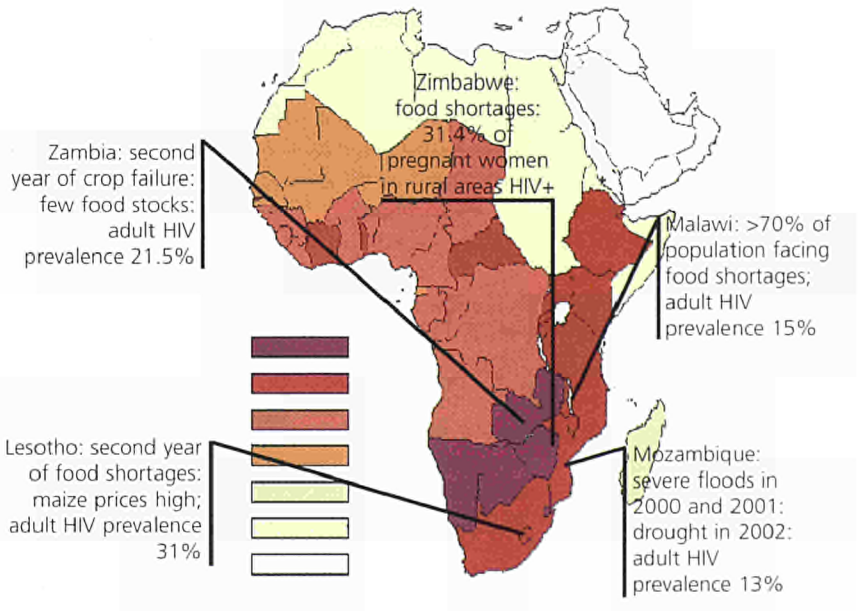
*"This crisis in Southern Africa and in the Horn of Africa is different from past famines, so we must look beyond relief measures of the past. Merely shipping in food is not enough. Our effort will have to combine food assistance and new approaches to farming with treatment and prevention of AIDS. It will require early warning and analysis systems that monitor HIV infection rates and famine indicators. It will require new agricultural techniques, appropriate to a depleted work force. It will require a renewed effort to wipe out HIV-related stigma and silence. It will require innovative, large-scale ways to care for orphans, with specific measures that enable children in AIDS-affected communities to stay in school... Above all, this new international effort must put women at the center of our strategy to fight AIDS."*

Kofi Annan, 30 December 2002, The New York Times

There is still neither a vaccine nor cheap, assured and effective treatment for HIV/AIDS. The pandemic continues to grow and to affect millions of people worldwide, particularly in the poor South where 95 per cent of the epidemic is concentrated. With most illness and death concentrated in the 15-50 age group, the disease deprives countries, communities, and households of their strong, productive people.

UNAIDS estimates that around 42 million individuals are living with HIV/AIDS. If this number is put in a broader perspective (assuming that for each HIV/AIDS case there are four relatives directly affected) it becomes clear that AIDS is affecting well over 160 million people. It is well known that sub-Saharan Africa is the region most affected by HIV/AIDS. Here it has become the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the adult population. It is estimated that most, if not all, of the 29 million people currently living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa will have died by the year 2020, joining the 13.7 million Africans already claimed by the epidemic. Clearly, Africa, and in particular Southern Africa, is at present in the "eye of the storm."

### Current food crises in Southern Africa



However, HIV/AIDS is increasing dramatically in Asia. Currently, India is leading the world in absolute numbers of HIV infections, estimated at 3-5 million. China too has a growing HIV/AIDS problem, with the number of AIDS cases estimated at 0.5 million and private estimates by Chinese specialists of up to 10 million infections. Given its sheer huge population size and the current rate of HIV infection in the region, Asia is set to overtake sub-Saharan Africa in absolute numbers before 2010. It can therefore be said that by the year 2020 Asia will be the epicentre of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

## Illness, death and food – the link

HIV/AIDS is a huge health problem with profound social and economic implications. In relation to food and nutrition security it is obvious that in the last two decades HIV/AIDS has affected and will continue to affect the ability of households to access food in the quantities and quality necessary for household members to lead an active and healthy life. In those parts of sub-Saharan Africa where the epidemic has "matured", households are facing exorbitant healthcare costs, labour shortages, declining asset base, breakdown of social solidarity and social bonds, downshifting in cropping systems and livestock management. All of these are contributing to food insecurity. Households that do not have the labour to grow their traditional crops retreat to cassava, which is easier to store, robust but has lower food value per unit.

The concept of food security entails food availability, equal access, stability, and quality. Consideration of these four components is critical for any policy on food security. Households are said to be food secure when all four elements of food security are in balance. Instability in one or more elements would render the household vulnerable to food insecurity. Adult morbidity and mortality may affect one or all of the elements of food security. Even minor health problems such as sprains and cuts may have significant knock-on effects if they incapacitate the farm family long enough to disrupt the farming cycle. Illness of productive adults is especially feared among farm households; it reduces the labour portfolio and its consequences often have short and long-term consequences.

The relationship between HIV/AIDS morbidity and mortality and food security is complex and of the greatest importance. Food security is a product of food production (using mainly family labour, land and other resources), food purchase (using household income), availability of assets and social claims. Own production takes precedence and provides the bulk of food consumed by most rural households. Food purchase or acquisition of food from the market, however, is an important source of food especially for complimentary and nutritious foodstuffs (protein sources – fish, meat; minerals – salt; vitamins – some fruits and vegetables; condiments) which cannot be produced at farm level. Assets such as livestock can be quickly turned into food or cash if need be while social claims facilitate non-market inter-household exchange of food and other goods and services.

HIV/AIDS morbidity and mortality affects food security by reducing households' ability to produce and buy food. It also results in loss of assets and often severe decline in the insurance value of social networks as favours are called in.

## How HIV/AIDS affects agriculture and rural livelihoods

- Death decreases agricultural labour force
- Long illness weakens people's labour inputs
- Changes household composition
- Increases number of orphans, increases burden on women carers
- Adverse effects on household nutrition status
- Acute decline in household income – loss of urban remittances
- Loss of credit entitlement to poorer households
- Decrease in aggregate community resources
- Overuse of local natural environment with adverse effects such as soil erosion, loss of infrastructure

## A double emergency - food security and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa

The current situation in Southern Africa is not the result of HIV/AIDS alone – but HIV/AIDS is a central factor in what is happening. The map shows that food insecurity and HIV/AIDS levels seem to run together. We have a double emergency of HIV/AIDS and food insecurity.

As long ago as 1989, studies in Uganda [2] showed that HIV/AIDS would have these effects on rural life. Evidence has now accumulated with studies from many African countries, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Namibia and others. Most recently, careful work by a team from Michigan State University in Kenya showed that the death of a household head is associated with a 60 per cent reduction in the value of the household's crop production. What is happening now in Southern Africa is not the end of the story, it is but the beginning. Current studies in Nigeria may indicate that the impact of HIV/AIDS on rural livelihoods in West Africa are also acutely affected by labour loss and illness associated with AIDS. All that is needed is a climatic or political "trigger" to set off a crisis of food insecurity in that region too.

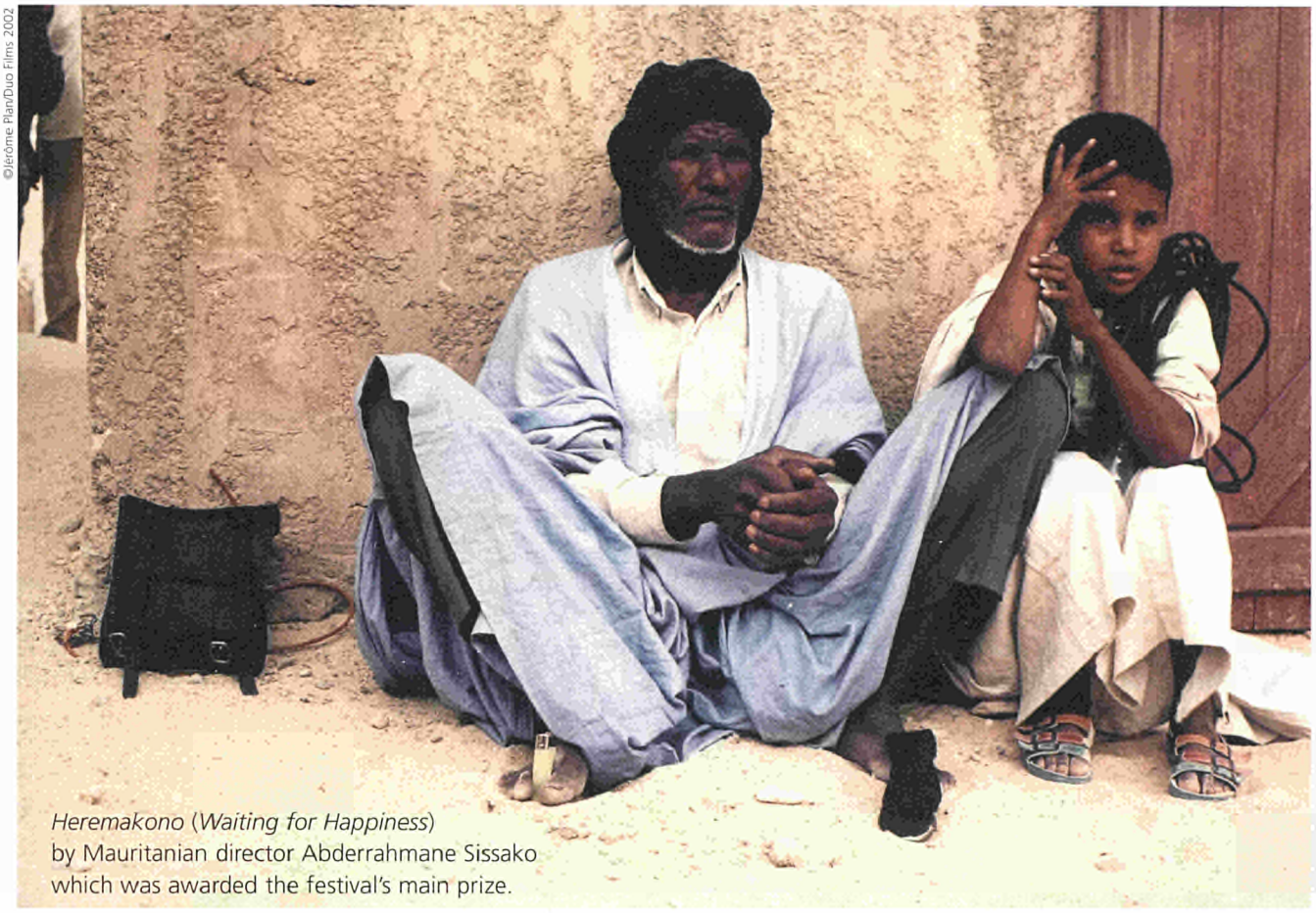
But this is not the whole story – we must be prepared, the world has changed

The EU and other development agencies cannot carry on with "business as usual" in a world with HIV/AIDS because:

- HIV/AIDS severely sets back "development" efforts by impoverishing rural households irreversibly, launching many into destitution, altering established technical relations between labour, land and capital, thus setting the ground for relief assistance.
- AIDS means that future relief work will have to be done in new ways because HIV/AIDS alters the nature of emergencies.
- HIV/AIDS affects the technical and specialist personnel and partners through whom development goals are achieved.
- HIV/AIDS undermines the current and future relevance of existing agricultural and food security strategies that are labour-intensive, cash crop-oriented and technology-driven.
- In those parts of Africa where HIV/AIDS has assumed catastrophic dimensions, the epidemic undermines relief, rehabilitation and development efforts through its systemic, long-term impact and its skewing effects on population structures.

The message of this article is: Development work has changed; HIV/AIDS is a long wave event; there will be more emergencies like that in Southern Africa – and not only in Africa. ■

1. Professor of Development Studies at the University of East Anglia, Norwich UK. His most recent book, written with Alan Whiteside, is "AIDS in the 21st Century: disease and globalisation", Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2002.
2. Tony Barnett & Piers Blaikie, *AIDS in Africa: its present and future impact* Wiley, London and Guilford Press, New York.




*Heremakono* (*Waiting for Happiness*) by Mauritanian director Abderrahmane Sissako which was awarded the festival's main prize.

# Fespaco 2003: African cinema in a time of change

Fespaco – Africa's premier film and television festival – is held every two years in Burkina Faso's capital city, Ouagadougou. This pan-African festival is the biggest regular cultural event on the continent, and is one of the film circuit's major events. The 18th edition of the festival took place from 22 February to 1 March 2003. The festival's big prize – Etalon de Yenenga (the Yenenga stallion) was awarded to the film *Heremakono* (*Waiting for Happiness*) by Mauritanian director Abderrahmane Sissako. The jury's choice bears witness to the fact that African cinema is experiencing a period of change. This article takes stock of a week that threw up many cinematographic surprises, and placed the spotlight on current trends, financing problems and the role of the acting profession.

Moussa Sawadogo

The award of the 'Yenenga Stallion' to Abderrahmane Sissako's *Heremakono* was a surprise ending to Fespaco 2003. No one was more surprised at the jury's choice than Abderrahmane Sissako himself, saying he was "astonished and happy", whilst acknowledging that his is not an easily accessible film. The film tells the story of a young boy, Abdallah, who dreams of emigrating to Europe; of Maata, an electrician, who has difficulties at work, and of a 'griotte' who is teaching her skills to the girl chosen to carry on her work. In *Heremakono*, all three protagonists are waiting for something, in a space where time reigns supreme and traps them in their feelings of longing.

To quote one festival-goer, *Heremakono* is "a highly symbolic film, slow-moving and beautifully shot". Head of the jury, Burkinabè film director, Idrissa Ouedraogo, himself a former winner of the star prize, hailed "the poetic dimension and metaphorical language of the film," adding that "the winning film embodies a philosophical reflection on Africa and the continent's future". Sissako thanked the jury "for their courage… in giving me this award."

From his first feature film *Octobre* in 1992 through to *Heremakono* in 2002, via *Le chameau et les bâtons flottants* (1995), *Sabrya* (1997) and *La vie sur terre* (1998), Abderrahmane Sissako has been notable for his ability to associate fiction with a documentary style, to present a combination of the political and the poetic. Critics are unanimous in describing his as one of the most accurate portrayals of Africa in recent years.

Born in Mauritania, Abderrahmane Sissako studied cinema at the VGIK in Moscow, one of the world's most prestigious film schools. Despite living in France, Africa is the core subject of his work. He defines cinema as "a quest for oneself" amid a diversity that is not initially discernible. Sissako says to those who find his film inaccessible that "cinema is not just entertainment", nor is it perfect, but "imperfect just as we all are".

Sissako uses the screenplay as the basis for his work, moving on to all kinds of improvisation and drawing on what his cast, locations and situations offer him. "A film is not cut-and-dried simply because there is a screenplay – that has to be disregarded to an extent when it comes to the actual filming. Then, filming has to make way for editing". *Heremakono* is full of anecdotes confirming this thesis. "With *Heremakono*, the events of one day would determine what was to happen the next. I met Maata at the beach, when a car was stuck in the sand, and offered him a part in the film. You have to accept cinema as the magical thing that it is. In my view, it's just pure chance".

Was Fespaco 2003 a turning point? Probably. In a move away from "blockbusters", the award has been given to a film that breaks with convention, that comes from another realm; one that is more demanding but also more likely to confirm Africa's place in the creative world of our times.

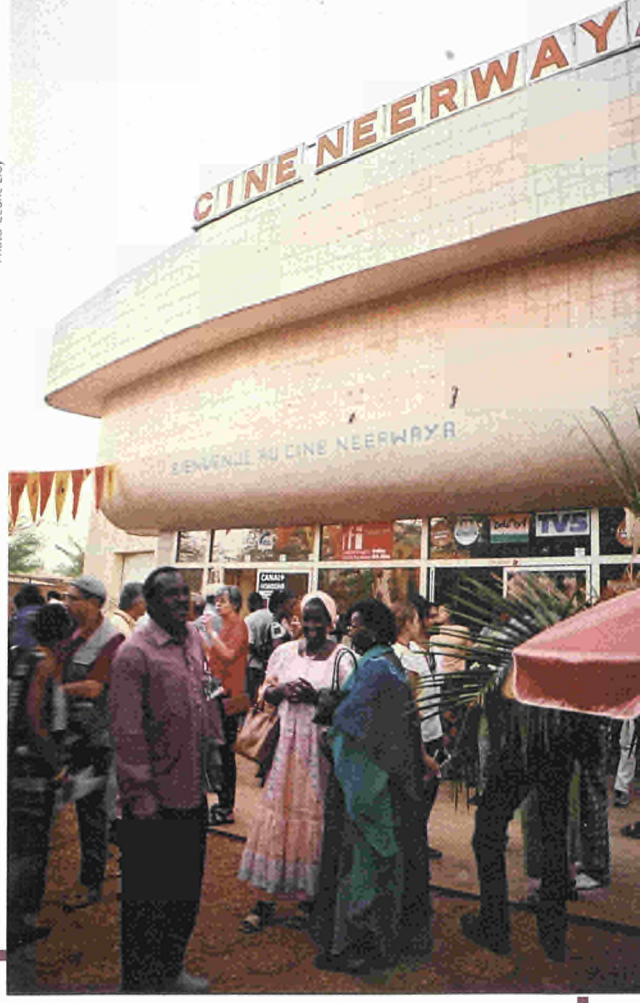


Photo Cédric Eloy

## The 2003 Awards

**Feature films:** Etalon de Yenenga: *Heremakono* (Abderrahmane Sissako)
**Jury's special prize:** *Kabala* by Assane Kouyaté (Mali)
**Prize for best actor:** Cheick Doukouré for *Paris selon Moussa* (Guinea)
**Prize for best actress:** Awatef Jendoubi for *Fatma* (Tunisia)
**Prize for interpretation (special mention):** A. Mahamat Moussa and M. Moctar Aguid for *Abouna* (Chad)
**Oumarou Ganda prize for a first film:** *L'Afrance* by Alain Gomis (France/Senegal)
**Prize for best screenplay:** Assana Kouyaté for *Kabala* (Mali)
**Prize for best cinematography:** Abraham Haile Biru for *Abouna* (Chad)
**Prize for best set:** Joseph Kpobly for *Heremakono* (Mauritania)
**Prize for best editing:** Ronelle Loots for *Promised Land* (South Africa)
**Prize for best sound:** Hachim Joulak for *Fatma* (Tunisia)
**Prize for best music:** Wasis Diop and Loy Ehrlich for *Le prix du pardon* (Senegal)
**European Union prize:** *L'Afrance* by Alain Gomis (France/Senegal)

### Spotlight on the acting profession

This year, Fespaco hailed the acting profession, choosing as its theme "The actor in the creation and promotion of African film". Actors and actresses from all over Africa considered the day-to-day problems they face in their profession. Their objective was to achieve better professional and social recognition.

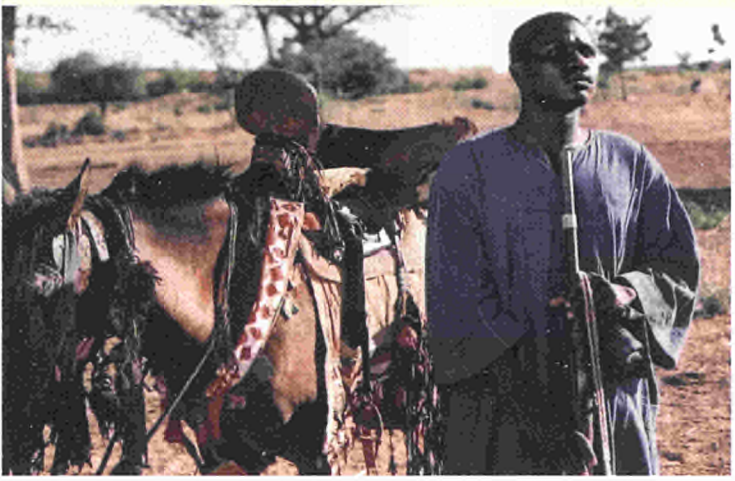
"Will Fespaco become the new Cannes, with a black face and dreadlocks?" asked the magazine Découverte in its January 2003 supplement dedicated to Fespaco. Even if this were the wish of African actors and actresses, it will be some time before their dream is realised, because they are often ignored and are still cinema's poor relations. But they are not in the depths of despair. They believe that there is strength in numbers. The 18th edition of Fespaco was an opportunity for them to lay the basis for a period of reflection that should enable their profession, in time, to acquire its proper place.

"Africa discovered the cinema a century ago. But as regards the form of the finished product, i.e. the tail end of the process intended for consumers (...) Africa now has to take the same road in the opposite direction if it is to understand the technical mechanisms and master the artistic subtleties", says Rasmané Ouédraogo, speaking for the profession in Africa. But he adds that "on the bottom rung of the ladder one person has been forgotten (...), whether consciously or unconsciously. Fifty years on, everyone has woken up to the absence on board of African actors and actresses".

Although Fespaco awards prizes for best female and best male actor, it is easier for a director to get him or herself invited to the festival. This is not the case for the acting profession, whose members are very often unable to make the trip to Ouagadougou. Quite simply, no one invites them. An African actor or actress often lives from hand to mouth, so low are the wages, whereas, in Europe, rates of

pay might be between €700 and €1,000 per day. In Africa payment is at the discretion of the director and producers. Abderramane Sissako explains that, in his most recent film, he paid the principal actors and actresses €1,500 for two months of film work: "They're doing what amounts to voluntary work. It doesn't matter whether they have a major part or not". Sissako makes use of his friends, or members of his family, simply because he lacks the financial means to do otherwise.

In a meeting held during Fespaco, actors and actresses set up an international monitoring committee, with responsibility for drafting the texts that will protect and promote their profession. They also decided to convene a constituent assembly within two years, recommending that each country in Africa set up a fund to support the promotion of the profession.



*La colère des Dieux* by Idrissa Ouédraogo, jury's president

In their campaign for better social recognition, African actors and actresses are fighting for social justice: "The evidence is there for all to see", adds Rasmané Ouédraogo. 'The profession is and will remain the very soul of any cinematographic creation, providing the centrifugal force that drives all the other elements, giving an identity, sense and colour to creation". An actor is as vital to the film as the director.

## Who is at fault?

Although actors and actresses gathered in Ouagadougou were able to measure the degree to which they are "forgotten", the reasons for this situation are many, making it difficult to reach a consensus. For director Abderramane Sissako, problems arise from the as yet embryonic nature of cinema in Africa and the small number of films made. With an average of three films a year, he says, an actor has little opportunity to make films and achieve stardom.

The young Burkinabè filmmaker Antoine Yougbaré is of the opinion that it is amateurism that prevents African actors and actresses from becoming celebrities – indeed, many of them do not work in the profession full-time. He explains that budgets are tight, and this is also why directors are first in line when it comes to festivals where they will defend their film, very often to the detriment of the acting profession.

A finger is also pointed at the press. Cheick Oumar Sissoko, the Malian director who became his country's Culture Minister, believes the "star system" is a creation of the press. As a shaper of opinion it must promote actors and actresses. Mauritanian director Abderramane Sissako echoes this view in the columns of Découverte: "The media must build up the profession. It's not the director's job. All my films promote their actors. After that, the task belongs to someone else".

Will salvation for the acting profession come from donors? It is a tempting thought. Although, in the past, many thought, like filmmaker Mahamat-Saleh Haroun from Chad, "that there is no actor capable of selling a film on his name alone, whereas directors can gain the support of a donor based on theirs", nowadays the situation is changing. As Antoine Yougbaré comments, "When you seek funding from a state or private body and you put the names of 'unknowns' on your list, that's as far as it goes. It's a well-known fact that a 'name' can help a film project along".

Cinema in Africa seems to have entered a new phase: having focused in the past on technique, it is now seeking personalities who are known and capable, on the basis of their name alone, to promote it. "People rush to cinemas not to read the long credits with the name of the director or producer in bold, but to live an adventure with and through an actor or actress, identifying with him or her for just a brief period of time… loving or hating, laughing or crying, conquering or being conquered", explains Rasmané Ouédraogo.

Filmmakers, actors and donors would appear to agree on one thing: the future of cinema in Africa will have to include promotion of the acting profession, meaning better training and better pay. Meanwhile, the profession itself has embarked on its own campaign – the constituent assembly anticipated for two years hence will place things on a more formal footing.

## The European Union increases support for African cinema

Fespaco 2003 was also an opportunity for filmmakers and development partners to review the position of cinema in Africa, to analyse the difficulties confronting it and propose solutions. During the festival, the European Commission organised a meeting with cinema professionals.

Over the years, the European Commission has cooperated very closely with the ACP countries through the European Development Fund (EDF). Over the course of a decade, it has funded the production of 150 films (76 since 2000). All these films bear testimony to the craftsmanship and technique of the filmmakers, and many have been awarded prizes at various festivals worldwide. *Nha fala* by Flora Gomes (Guinea-Bissau) and *Madame Brouette* by Moussa Sene Absa (Senegal) took part in the official competitions at the Venice and Berlin festivals, respectively; and *Abouna*, by Mahamat-Saleh Haroun (Chad), *Heremakono*, by Abderrahmane Sissako (Mauritania), and *Kabala*, by Assane Kouyaté (Mali), were presented at the Cannes Film Festival. Fourteen films and one TV series supported by the European Commission took part in the 18th edition of Fespaco.

In September 2000, the Commission inaugurated a support programme for films produced in ACP countries. With

*Gorel ou le Mille Promis*, by Sékou Traoré with actor Rasmané Ouédraogo

a budget of €6 million, the programme was launched initially for a period of three years. It has two objectives: to give greater, and more regular, support to film-making in the ACP countries and, in geographical terms, to provide greater balance, channelling funds towards filmmakers in countries where governments play less of a role in cultural life. Films that receive support are selected on the basis of invitations to tender.

The Commission programme covers production and distribution of feature films, medium-length films and shorts for the cinema, and also documentaries and films made for TV. To receive funding, projects must be presented by directors originating from an ACP country, and the programme has become an effective tool serving the ACP countries' film industries. Over 200 projects have been proposed since 2000, 46 have received funding and 38 of those have benefited from production assistance amounting to a total of €4,27 million. Eight projects have received promotion and distribution support amounting to €410,000.

## Promoting cultural diversity

The European Commission wishes to further strengthen its support to the cinema in ACP countries and will shortly be launching an evaluation of the programme in order to 'customise' its future intervention, which is to cover the period 2004-2006. In addition, a new type of support – for distribution – is on the cards, and this could consist of assistance to distributors and operators in cinemas in the ACP countries.

By providing support to cinema in the ACP countries, the EU wants to open up the film-industry sector that is increasingly dominated by US films, says Jean Michel Baer, from the European Commission's education and culture directorate-general. US films account for 80% of the European market and practically the entire African market. Far from retreating into a cultural backwater, says Joëlle Guenier-Amsallem from the EuropeAid Cooperation Office (AIDCO), cooperation must work towards cultural diversity; "the least developed countries must be able to express their culture". She also believes that the budget for supporting cinema in the ACP countries should be increased.

The new programme of support for ACP cinema is in preparation. It could include pilot projects for enhancing organisation and cohesion between professionals in the cinema industry. Support for film festivals might be possible, within the context of regional networks.

Mr Baba Hama, Fespaco director, has already expressed his satisfaction at the European Commission approach, which is sensitive to the concerns of African filmmakers. ■

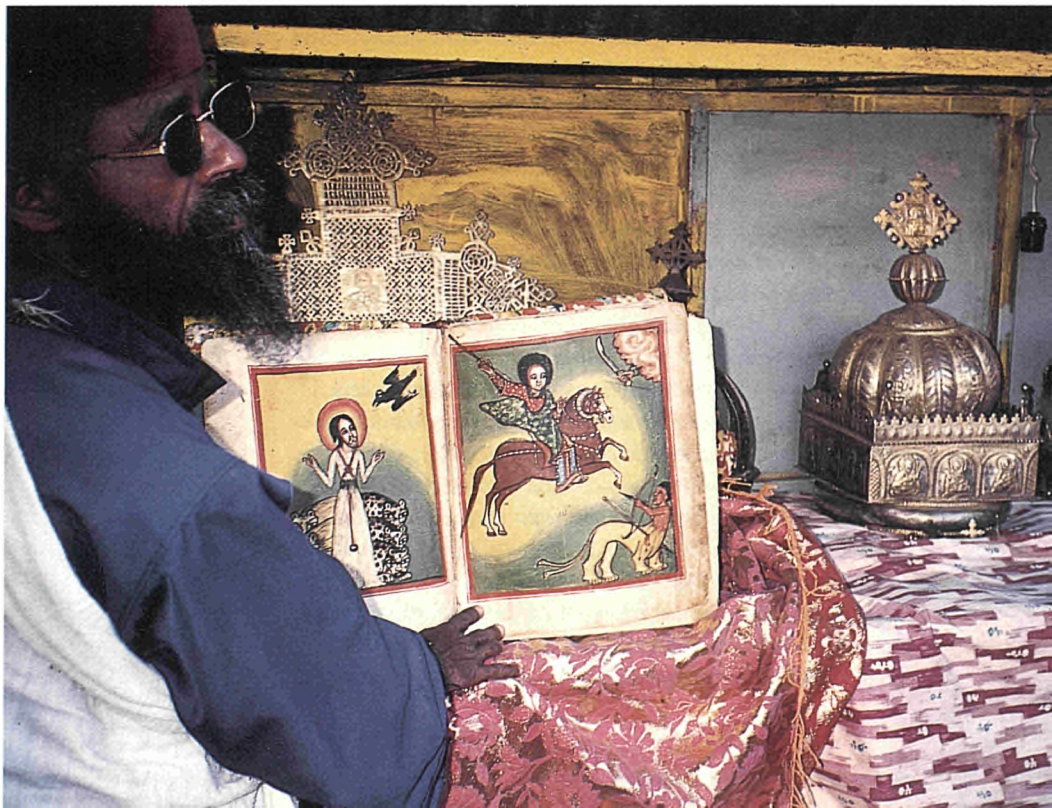
*Madame Brouette* by Moussa Sene Absa.

IFAD/ Franco Mattioli

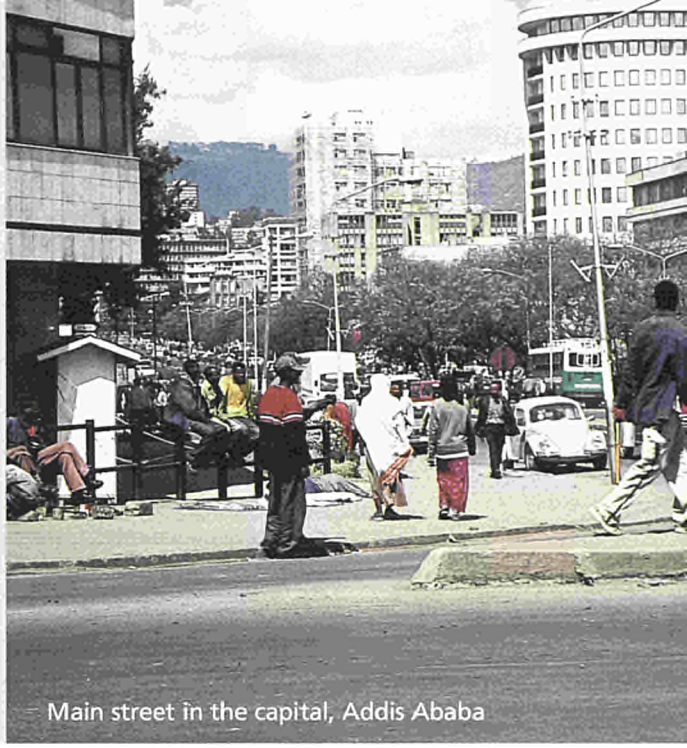
# Ethiopia

Ethiopia, formerly Abyssinia, is the oldest independent country in Africa.
Located in the northeast of Africa, it is one of the largest and most populous countries of the continent. It makes up most of what is known as the Horn of Africa, and is bordered by Djibouti and Eritrea to the north, Somalia to the east, Kenya to the south and Sudan to the west. The country's dramatic and diverse landscape encompasses lowlands, deserts, canyons and high plateaus.
Ethiopia is amongst the poorest nations in the world with 89% of its population living on less than US$2 per day. An essentially rural country, Ethiopia's economy is based on agriculture, which accounts for almost half of GDP, 85% of exports, and 80% of total employment. Heavy dependence on agriculture makes the country extremely vulnerable to external shocks such as drought or commodity price fluctuations.
Ethiopia is facing several difficult challenges. After three consecutive years of drought, the country is threatened with another serious food crisis, and responding to it has been the government's overwhelming preoccupation. After a two-year conflict with Eritrea, the peace process is still fragile. The country is having to cope with the HIV/AIDS pandemic.
Ethiopia has gone through major political and social changes in the last 30 years. In 1991 the last civil war came to an end and a process of democratisation has been underway since then. There are some positive signs that the process has begun to take hold.
The decentralisation process is underway, and progress is being made in private sector development and human rights.
Ethiopia is an active member of regional organisations such as IGAD and COMESA (which the Prime Minister Meles Zanawi now chairs) and of the African Union, the headquarters of which is Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa.

Report and photos (unless otherwise indicated): Jos van Beurden



Colourful posters and postcards in the national tourist office show Amhara, Oromo, Tigray, Afar and other peoples. All with a smile. All proud and beautiful. The 65 million Ethiopians form a fascinating mosaic of ethnic groups – 76 altogether. The country's scenery is equally beautiful. It varies from rough, barren mountains and monoliths in the north to lush pastures carpeted with flowers in the south. To the west is the Nile valley and to the east the Ogaden desert. The ancient Coptic Church and traces of early Islam make the country a cultural treasure trove. Christians and Muslims, the latter by now a small majority, live together in peace. But how does this image correspond with reality in Ethiopia?



Main street in the capital, Addis Ababa

# The long road out of conflict and poverty

This is how Ethiopians want their country to be seen. Ethiopia as Africa's pearl that was never colonised. As a well organised, modern, regional power. They abhor the image of a poorly administered wasps' nest, from which only news of disasters reaches the outside world, where people have lost all inclination for laughter and happiness, and where the death toll from too many wars and famines casts a dark shadow over the splendour of the scenery.

In 1991 the rebels of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) took over power in Addis Ababa from Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam. This ended 17 years of military rule, which had begun in 1974 with the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie. Neither during the empire nor during military rule did the people of Ethiopia make much progress.

The failure of both regimes to increase the country's food production led as much to their downfall as their inability to solve the problem of so many ethnic groups living together in one country. Both were undemocratic. Both tried to impose from the capital agricultural policies that never received wide support from the rural population.

## First steps in democracy

The new government made many promises. More democracy. More freedoms. An agricultural policy without the feudal land ownership of the Emperor or the unproductive collectivisation of the Mengistu era. Eritrea gained its independence from Ethiopia in 1993. In 1995 a new constitution was proclaimed and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was created. The country was divided into nine autonomous regional state councils, each with its own parliament and government and, in theory, wide economic powers.

The EPRDF (Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front), a coalition of the TPLF and some other political groupings, dominates most institutions at federal and regional level. The EPRDF is so powerful that internal frictions – such as occurred in 2001 when high ranking EPRDF members were arrested on corruption charges – are more important than any challenges posed by the legal opposition.

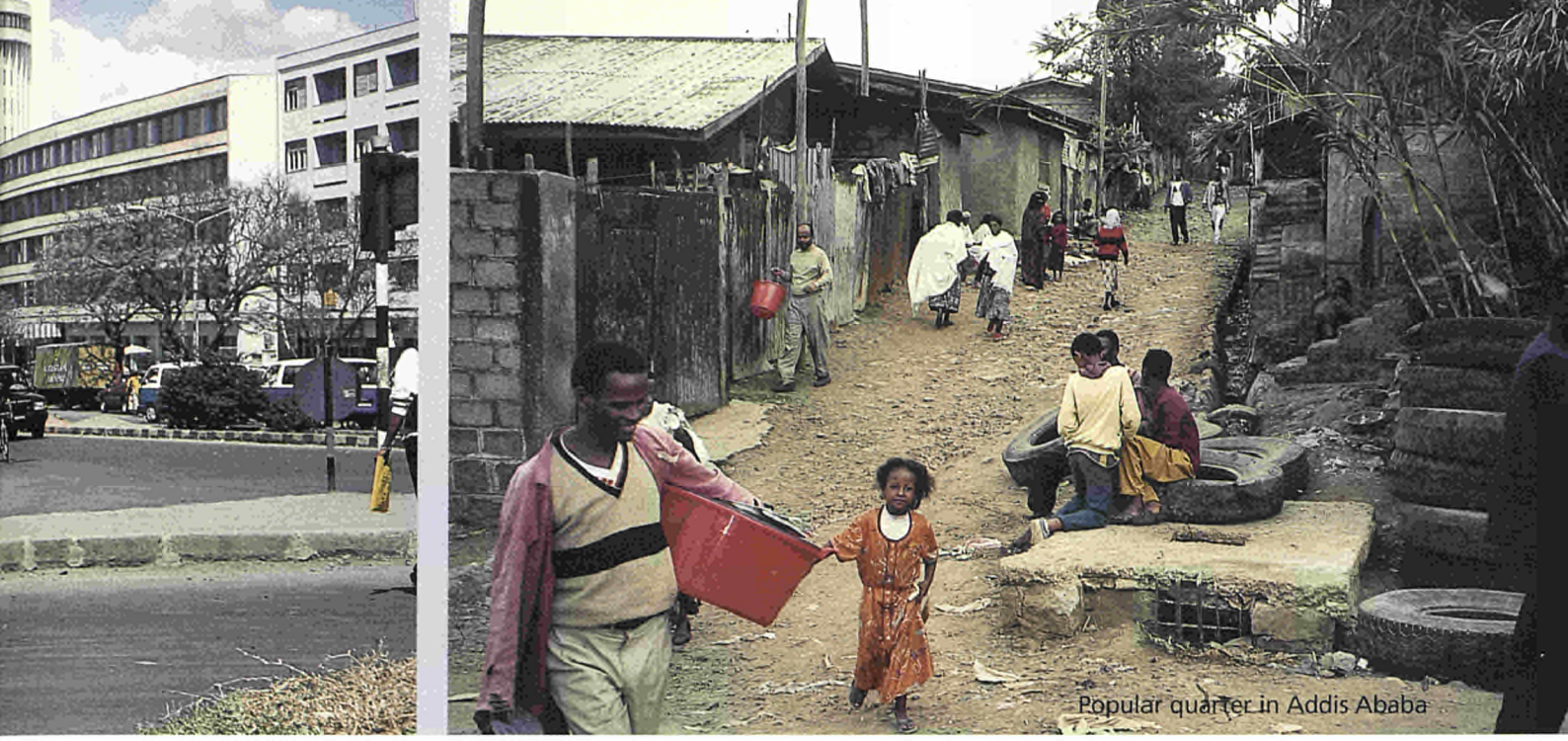
The main opposition to the government comes from the outlawed Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). The TPLF and OLF had fought together against the Mengistu government. The OLF took part in the transitional government in 1991, but went underground after a year, as it considered the other main parties undemocratic and that Tigrayans had too much control of political and economic life.

The OLF has several guerrilla bases in Oromya Region and, according to its manifesto, is fighting for an independent Oromo homeland. The government is suspicious of Oromo with any OLF sympathies, even if they are opposed to violence and accept that Oromo territory should remain an integral part of Ethiopia.

## A major setback

People do not like to talk about the devastating border war with Eritrea (1998-2000), either in Addis Ababa or in Tigray Region, which borders Eritrea. Neither side wants to go through that again. In December 2000 the two parties signed a formal peace agreement. Four months later soldiers of the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) secured the withdrawal of all Ethiopian and Eritrean troops from the border area and installed a 25-kilometre "temporary security zone". The plan is that the physical construction and marking of the 1,000-kilometre border will start in May this year.

The war has had a major detrimental impact on Ethiopia's development. With between 70,000 and 100,000 dead and equal numbers left handicapped on both sides, its cost was enormous. Apart from the destruction of public buildings and private houses, tourism virtually came to a standstill throughout the country. Donors became reluctant to offer



Popular quarter in Addis Ababa

anything more than emergency aid. A serious start with the reconstruction of villages in the war zone can be made only after the demarcation is finished, the area de-mined and people have returned to their homes.

## Tension and fear

The past half-century raises the question of the place of conflict and intolerance in the life of Ethiopia. Political leadership frequently coincided with military leadership. "Might was and still is right in Ethiopia", writes 72-year-old human rights activist Mesfin Wolde-Mariam in his book *The Horn of Africa: Conflict and Poverty*. "Ethiopian society is still finding it difficult to establish an institutionalised way of sharing power and to develop a political tradition."

An Ethiopian expert in conflict resolution who prefers to remain anonymous ("at present there is much freedom, but it can change, and then I can be arrested for these quotations") confirms Mesfin's words: "I was a radical student in the 1970s. Our student party was extremely intolerant. We never listened to opponents… distrust became the most important characteristic of politics in Ethiopia, and it still is."

Mesfin writes that tension and fear typify Ethiopian society. There is fear of losing a job or promotion, fear of being arrested, beaten or tortured and fear of being killed and of leaving one's dependants without anything to live on. Covering up these tensions and fear prevents open and rational discussions on important issues until they "flare into a violent conflict", as happened with Eritrea.

Selling firewood in Amhara region

## Obstacles to development

There is a close relationship between conflict and development in Ethiopia. Conflict has for a long time been an obstacle to progress, though it is not the only one that holds the country in the grip of poverty. Ethiopia has rich natural resources – of that there is no doubt. But agriculture, which is supposed to provide employment for 85 per cent of the population and accounts for almost 45 per cent of GDP, is poorly developed. Most farmers are smallholders. They do not – or cannot – invest and use of fertilisers is among the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa. Despite recurring droughts and an endemic lack of water, irrigation is the exception rather than the rule.

The rate of deforestation has been devastating. In 1960 some 40 per cent of Ethiopia was still covered with forest. Now it is less than three per cent. Every year, says a UN report, 200,000 hectares of forest disappear as a result of forest fires, usually started by subsistence peasants in search of land.

The poor state of the road network discourages farmers from growing surpluses, as there is no means of getting them to the marketplaces. Yet Ethiopia's external trade depends on agricultural products. Coffee sales account for more than half its foreign exchange earnings. Leather and qat (a cash crop – the leaves are chewed as a stimulant) also bring in exchange. But prices on the world coffee market have collapsed and small coffee farmers are paying the price.

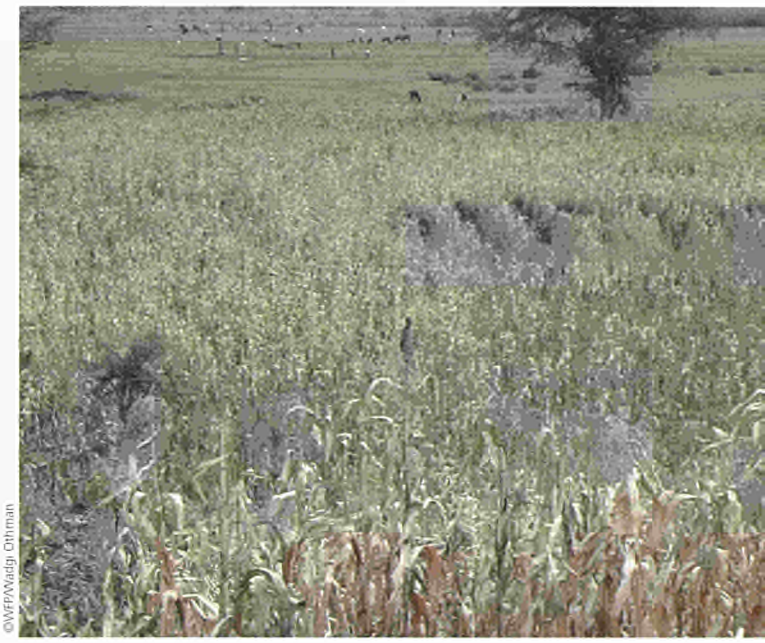
Statistics about Ethiopia leave one pessimistic. It is still one of the poorest countries in the world. In the UN's 2002 Human Development Index it ranks 168th out of 173 countries. Only five countries in the world are considered poorer. Half the population is chronically malnourished. More than 40 per cent of the population will not get beyond 40 years old. Only a quarter has access to safe drinking water. Three million Ethiopians are HIV-infected. Although the country has laws that guarantee equality between men and women, the position of women remains very weak.

Some Ethiopians share the pessimism provoked by these facts and figures. Others see light at the end of the tunnel. "Things have improved since 1991. We can discuss critical issues more openly now", says a woman in the country's capital. But, with another famine threatening millions with starvation, it is only the light of a very small candle. ■

# Ethiopia's recurring crisis:
## a problem of food insecurity

Once again this year Ethiopia finds itself overwhelmed by a food crisis. Up to 15 million people, or more than one fifth of the population, are threatened with severe hunger and reliant on food aid. Yet Ethiopia has increased its food production by 70 per cent since the 1980s, experiencing in 2002 a second consecutive year of bumper crop production. In addition, given the substantial levels of donor assistance over the past 20 years one must wonder what explains the prevalence and persistence of food shortages in this region.

Jane Tully*



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Ethiopia has a long history of recurring and devastating famine. On the surface it appears that erratic weather conditions have repeatedly triggered large-scale hunger and starvation. Indeed, reports of poor rains and drought followed by graphic pictures of famine stricken victims are all too familiar in the Western media. However, to portray ecological factors as the sole cause of Ethiopia's recurring predicament is to vastly oversimplify the situation.

### Food insecurity and poverty

Essentially, Ethiopia suffers from fundamental, severe and pervasive food insecurity. An estimated 4-5 million people are classified as chronically food insecure and despite significant external assistance the situation does not appear to be improving. Chronic food insecurity in Ethiopia is closely correlated with poverty. Poverty, in turn, is primarily a rural concern with 85 per cent of the population living in rural areas, with little or no support from the state, relying on low productivity subsistence farming. Such conditions of poverty fuel Ethiopia's vulnerability to food shortages so that when there is even the slightest abnormality in food production or distribution, a food crisis will inevitably follow. Thus, the first step in breaking the cycle of recurrent crisis in Ethiopia is to tackle the problem of long-term food insecurity.

The prevalence of chronic food insecurity in Ethiopia can be attributed to a series of mutually reinforcing interlinked factors including overdependence on subsistence farming, lack of assets, antiquated techniques, problems of land tenure, weak markets, poor infrastructure, lack of opportunities outside the sphere of agriculture, a fragile ecosystem, increased demand on limited resources, governance issues – and ironically, reliance on external food aid. In fact, its roots are far more deeply entrenched in social and economic structures than in ecological events and it is these that the government must address.

### Agricultural failure

One of the fundamental causes of extreme poverty and food insecurity is over reliance on low productivity subsistence agriculture. The Ethiopian economy is heavily dependent on agriculture with over 45 per cent of its GDP deriving from this sector. Yet despite this, agriculture here is amongst the least productive in the world. The natural response to this has been to endeavour to increase production as a means of improving household food security.

Thus, since the emergence of the transitional government in 1991, policies have focused on achieving agricultural self-sufficiency. In 1994 the Agricultural Development-Led Industrial Strategy (ADLI) was adopted as the primary development strategy. This plan promotes the use of new technologies – by providing fertilisers and better seed, improving irrigation and encouraging better agricultural practices – provides limited credit to encourage investment and focuses on improvements in infrastructure.

For the peasant farmer or pastoralist, life on the land is a continuous struggle. But there are not many alternative sources of income. Without any state support or insurance against crop failure, farming remains a precarious and undependable way of life. Despite recent initiatives to improve antiquated farming techniques, the sustainability of the traditional livelihood of many is under question. Recurrent drought has diminished both food stocks and the availability of arable land. Investment in irrigation systems is minimal: only five per cent of potentially irrigable land is irrigated, according to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). Thus, vulnerability to drought is high. This is further exacerbated by the massive growth in population, which has doubled to 67 million since 1980, and the subsequent pressure that places on an already fragile ecosystem. Problems of declining soil fertility, overgrazing, deforestation and desertification abound. Another more structural factor is the

existence of a rigid land tenure system and continual redistribution of land which discourages investment in farms.

### Market failure

The predicament of farmers and traders is aggravated by the poor functioning of the market system. The evidence here reinforces the hypothesis that food security is more a question of accessibility than availability. The three key impediments to efficient functioning of the market in Ethiopia are: inadequate roads and transport structures; lack of access to credit and lack of information. Without adequate roads, food distribution is time consuming and expensive. Without market information, traders are confined to their own locality. Without affordable access to credit, farmers can't invest so as to increase productivity. Thus, they are caught in a poverty trap and forced to remain as subsistence farmers.

Last year, despite bumper crops in some parts of the country, few traders reaped the expected economic benefits and many ended up deeper in debt than before. Because of the abundant yield, and given that many farmers are self-sufficient, prices in local markets were low. Traders weren't aware of opportunities to make a profit in other regions, nor had the means to transport goods there. Thus, they were forced to sell at a loss. For those who had previously obtained credit and invested in their farms, the low profit levels made repayment impossible and resulted in them selling off their assets.

Another, more startling example of the market inefficiency presented itself during the 1984 famine. While hundreds of thousands perished of hunger in the north of the country, there was an excess of food available in the south. To ensure markets operate efficiently and that food finds its way from areas of surplus to those of deficit the government needs to improve the countries inadequate transport and communication networks and develop the private sector.

### 'Food aid mentality' and governance

A surprising contributory factor to food insecurity in Ethiopia, is the abundant and steady inflow of food aid. On average Ethiopia has received 600,000-800,000 MT from the West per annum for the past 15 years. Yet, ironically enough, at the same time, the food insecurity situation and malnutrition levels have worsened. Food aid depresses the prices of locally produced goods on the local market and can have a negative impact on the levels of agricultural production, investment and innovation, especially as it is frequently available even when there are ample harvests. In this regard, food aid targeting in many regions in Ethiopia has come in for some criticism. A 'food aid mentality' has emerged with a large part of the population dependant on external assistance for at least a couple of months each year. While it is clearly a necessity in times of acute food insecurity, this is an unsustainable solution in the long term and undermines other food security enhancing efforts.

This has been acknowledged by both the current government and donors, and there have been considerable efforts and reforms to redress the situation in recent years. In the past, due to civil strife and a centrally managed government, attention was not always focused on putting in place appropriate policies. However, food security is now at the fore of Ethiopia's development agenda. In 1995, the DPPC (Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission) in Addis Ababa was restructured, with the function of tackling the causes of food crises and ensuring an adequate timely response when crises do occur. Since the end of the border conflict with Eritrea in 2001, the government has taken several steps to revise and implement its food security strategy. Furthermore, under the Cotonou Agreement, food security in Ethiopia has been identified as an area for priority attention by the EU and the government. €54 million has been committed in the form of budget support, for the 2002-2007 period, to improve the country's long term food security. This will fund projects that address market failures, the lack of safety nets and the vulnerability of pastoral areas. In addition to this, €102 million has been provided to respond to the current food crisis.

Addressing food insecurity in Ethiopia requires a multifaceted multisectoral long term approach. Emphasis has been or ought to be placed on methods to ensure stable harvests, insurance schemes to counteract crop failure, alternatives to employment in agriculture, employment generation schemes, cash for work schemes in place of food aid, development of the private sector, access to micro finance and investment in infrastructure. Unless the root causes are adequately addressed now, the scourge of food shortages will continue to blight Ethiopia and hinder progress and development for years to come. ■

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Hardim- West Hararghe is one the breadbaskets of Ethiopia. But this year, farmers fear they will lose 90 per cent of their maize harvest. In many areas, fields contain only wilting maize and stunted sorghum. Both crops are most people's staple foods – accounting for over 40 per cent of Ethiopia's total cereal production.

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Shehet town, Ab' Ala district.
Even if it begins raining in the Afar Region today, food aid distributions will have to continue – at least until livestock that has managed to survive the drought starts producing milk.

# A foreign policy dominated by pragmatism

Ethiopia has had an active, usually pro-Western foreign policy since the 1930s, except during the late 1970s and 1980s when the country went through a period of international isolation under Marxist rule. This article looks at recent history and at a range of foreign policy issues, illustrating current thinking with extracts from an interview with the Deputy Foreign Minister, Tekeda Alemu.

When Mussolini's Italian forces invaded the country in 1935, Emperor Haile Selassie called on the League of Nations for help. Ethiopia developed strong relations with the USA in the decades that followed. In the 1960s Addis Ababa became the seat of the UN Economic Commission for Africa and of the Organisation for African Unity (now the African Union). In 1977, when Ethiopia became a Marxist state three years after the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie, it developed close ties with the Soviet Union and alienated itself from the West. The country entered a period of international isolation.

This changed in 1991. The Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) government restored Ethiopia's traditional role as an active, regional, pro-Western power. The country intensified its relations with the US, while those with the former Soviet Union became less important. It developed friendly relations with Eritrea and mediated in conflicts in neighbouring Somalia and Sudan, mostly under the aegis of the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD)[1].

In 1995 there was a break with Sudan, after an attack on Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa. This rift began to mend in 1998 with the outbreak of war with Eritrea, with whom relations are still fragile. Ethiopia supports the US administration in its campaign against international terrorism. At the end of February this year, the Ethiopian government and the European Commission signed a strategy document that outlines their cooperation for the period 2002-07.

## Eritrea

The border war with Eritrea ended in 2000 with the signing of a peace agreement, but the dispute has remained on top of the foreign policy agenda. The UN Mission on Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) has been overseeing the withdrawal of troops and is supervising a 25-kilometre demilitarised "temporary security zone". Deputy Foreign Minister Tekeda Alemu believes the peace process is going well and that a return to fighting is very unlikely: "Hopefully the demarcation process will be handled carefully, on the basis of justice, fairness and prudence. We want to be sure that we never again have this sort of crisis".

## Sudan

Relations with the government in Khartoum deteriorated rapidly after 1991 and reached an all-time low in 1995, when Sudan was accused of supporting an attack on the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, in Addis Ababa. Tekeda Alemu says 1995 was a painful episode, but that relations have improved since then. "We need pragmatism on both sides. At the moment relations are excellent. There are agreements on the import of Sudanese oil, the use of the Port Sudan harbour, and trade between both countries. A 400-kilometre cross-border highway linking Ethiopia with Sudan has been completed. This will facilitate transport and trade between the two countries."

## Kenya

In Kenya Mwai Kibaki has succeeded Arap Moi as President. There is often trouble along the border. Ethiopians carry out cattle raids in Kenya, while armed groups of Oromo rebels attack government premises in Ethiopia from the Kenyan side. But Tekeda Alemu says relations with Kenya have always been good. "There is some cattle rustling on both sides. The local authorities do not always handle this wisely. But there are no ideological or trade problems. The leaders of both countries, including Kenya's new leader, get along well."

## Somalia

Since 1996 Ethiopian army units have been entering southern Somalia to suppress rebels of Somali and Oromo origin. Militant Islamic fundamentalists in Somalia have become another target since September 2001. Ethiopia does not recognise the transitional government in Mogadishu. Some people believe that a weak Somalia is good for Ethiopia's position in the Horn of Africa. Tekeda Alemu argues that the writ of the transitional government does not run far and that it is not widely recognised internationally:

People of Shambuko and religious leaders welcome UN Special Representative Legwaila Joseph Legwaila

UNMEE Photo: J. Aramburu (August 2001)

**In June 2000, after two years of fighting in a border dispute, Ethiopia and Eritrea signed a peace agreement. In July, the UN Security Council set up a peacekeeping mission (UNMEE) to maintain liaison with the parties and verify the ceasefire. In March this year a six-month extension of its mandate was approved, until 15 September.**

"We are closer to General Aideed and we have good relations with the autonomous Puntland in north-eastern Somalia. For Ethiopia a bad government is better than no government at all. No government means the rise of all sorts of armed groups. After serious incidents in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa we were forced to clip the wings of the Somali Al Ittihad (terrorist network)." As for Somaliland, "we have benefited from the relative stability there. We have given moral support to the Somaliland government. When there is peace in southern Somalia, we will encourage a dialogue between Somalia and Somaliland on their future relations".

### The United States

The war between Ethiopia and Eritrea put a lot of pressure on relations between Addis Ababa and Washington. But since September 2001 Washington has encouraged Ethiopia to play an important role in its "war against terrorism", especially in relation to Somalia. The US is one of the country's major donors.

"Even before September 11, 2001 we were aware of the dangers of international terrorism, but we did not get the support we needed to fight it." Tekeda Alemu says that has changed. "Ethiopia is prepared to cooperate with all countries that feel that there is a real threat. The threat should be rooted out. There is a need for a solid and strong international effort. Poverty and injustice breed terrorism. It also has to do with moral values. Poverty makes it possible for those with the financial resources to get friendship and to influence people, especially young people. We see this clearly in our sub-region. The traditional religious tolerance in this country will protect us against the radicalisation of both Muslims and Christians. We agree 120 per cent with the US on this."

Recently, however, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi criticised the rich countries, including the US, for paying too low prices for coffee beans from small farmers in Ethiopia and other countries, while subsidising their own farmers.

### China

Some close ties with China, developed during the liberation war, have carried over into government. China is setting up joint ventures with pharmaceutical firms in Ethiopia and is heavily involved in road construction. There is concern that Ethiopia is very vulnerable to cheap Chinese imports. But Tekeda Alemu denies that China is selling them arms: "We are not involved in any arms deals with the Chinese. During the conflict with Eritrea we had to do some shopping, as much of our equipment was even rusty. As to our trade with them, we think it is not a question of a lack of protection but of more support to our own private sector. Our textile and leather factories should become competitive with other markets. The Chinese will have to open their markets more for African goods. A major problem is contraband. The market in for example Makelle, the capital of Tigray Region, is flooded with extremely cheap Chinese textiles and shoes. The government has set up a national committee to fight contraband."

### The European Union

Since 1975 the European Union has allocated more than €2.3 billion to Ethiopia. In the 1990s the European Commission supplied macro-economic support through its Stabex and structural adjustment support facilities. The border war with Eritrea upset their good relations but the EU remains the country's main trading partner. It gives critical support to the government and closely watches the human rights situation. Late last year it contributed a further €70 million in emergency food aid.

The "Country Strategy Paper" outlining EU-Ethiopia cooperation was signed on 27 February 2002. The total amount allocated is €384 million (transport €211 m, food security €54 m, macro-economic support €96 m and governance/conflict prevention €23 m). In addition to this sum, an amount of €154 million is also available for cases of unforeseen needs.

"During the border war there were misperceptions. We would have liked our EU partners to condemn the (Eritrean) violations of international law. Our very survival was at stake. There is also a tendency in Europe to exaggerate the role of the opposition groups abroad. These groups also have a responsibility for the democratisation and stability of the country.

"Ethiopia has started to export raw sugar to the EU market [under the "Everything but arms" initiative (EBA)][2]. That should be followed by other exports. At present our dialogue with the EU is useful and transparent. We have accepted that an EU mission investigated certain events in Tepi and Awassa, and the government has taken steps against the culprits, which even went beyond what the members of the mission thought necessary. The leadership of this country has said that the kind of behaviour shown by the Special Forces in Tepi and Awassa is a danger to the very survival of the country. Democratisation is required, including security and respect for human rights. That is a very deep commitment." ■

1. IGAD's mission is to achieve regional cooperation and economic integration through promotion of food security, sustainable environmental management, peace and security, intra-regional trade and development of improved communications infrastructure. Its members are the six countries in the Horn of Africa – Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda.
2. EBA extends duty and quota free access to all products originating in Least Developed Ccountries, except arms and ammunition.

Typical Amahara landscape near village of Adefaa

# Exclusion and national cohesion

Every government in Ethiopia faces the same three problems: poverty, multi-ethnicity and a history of internal oppression and violence. The Ethiopian constitution guarantees fundamental freedoms, including equality for men and women, a parliamentary democracy, and space for civil society organisations. It offers autonomy and cultural identity to ethnic groups. On paper it looks fine, but does the reality live up to it?

There are now few reminders of the travel permits needed for visits outside the capital and the numerous roadblocks that characterised the military rule of Mengistu Haile Mariam. One can move freely. Journeys are shorter, as the roads have improved. In an hour instead of two you reach a spot where some hundred peasant women are sitting under a tree. They belong to the Oromo, the country's largest ethnic group with some 26 million people. Their meeting is evidence of the greater freedom that exists for voluntary organisations and other civil bodies. Many of those present had been abducted and raped when they were young, and so ended up being married off. Many elders in their villages gloss over this by saying that it is part of the tradition of some ethnic groups.

These victims of abduction have been brought together by the Oromo grassroots organisation, Hundee. Mrs Majitu, one of their workers, encourages the women to talk about their experiences. One tells me: "My three daughters were abducted. They were ten, eleven and twelve. A group of youngsters kept the eldest a few weeks in the forest. Afterwards she needed so much medical care that we had to sell two oxen to pay the doctor's bill."

## A better human rights record

Those involved in human rights in Ethiopia point out that fear, tension and violence are endemic. Historian Bahru Zewde says it always has been like that. "Control over the state and its resources has always demanded the force of arms", he says. "Inscriptions on old stone slabs in Axum from the beginning of the Christian era talk about war, the number of enemies killed and the cattle taken. Since then not much has changed. Warrior kings dominate Ethiopia's history." Professor Bahru concedes that the present government is subtler in its methods of control. In his view there is relatively little violence at the moment, except in the south. He argues that drought and inadequate government policies are now the main problems.

Most Ethiopians, whether pro- or anti-government, agree that the human rights record has improved since 1991. People discuss sensitive issues quite openly. Both the English and Amharic media can be outspoken and critical of the ruling party. Although abduction of women has not disappeared, the Government has set up women's bureaux at the federal and regional level. There is equality for men and women. The Government actively seeks dialogue with opposition forces. The constitution guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms and there is parliamentary democracy.

## A long way still to go

But there is still a gap between the officially declared intentions of the federal government and the practical situation at the regional and local level. Academics, students, journalists and members of civil society are harassed and sometimes even killed. Dr Merera Gudina of the opposition Oromo National Congress (ONC) says that Ethiopia is in transition, but "it is one without democratisation". Of the 547 seats in the Council of People's Representatives, the

opposition occupies only 13. He says that if opposition parties try to recruit support in the country they are subject to harassment by security forces. When students demonstrated in the campus of Addis Ababa University in April 2001, police moved in leaving 30 dead and several hundred injured and arrested. Some fled the country.

Serious human rights violations occurred in March last year in the town of Tepi in south-west Ethiopia. Following a clash resulting in the deaths of some policemen and demonstrators, the government sent in Special Forces. More than 100 people were killed. Over a thousand houses were burned down or demolished and 400 people were detained. An EU investigation, reluctantly allowed by the government, referred to "excessive and disproportionate use of force" by the Special Forces.

One might therefore wonder why people think there has been some improvement in the human rights situation. A western diplomat said about the Tepi massacre: "It is unique in Ethiopia's history that the government allowed a foreign mission to make an independent investigation". Before the mission handed in its report, the government had arrested and dismissed some officials.

Merera Gudina of the ONC says why he thinks he can be so open in his criticism: "It is because Ethiopia has become a donors' democracy. Those of us who are known by donors are relatively free. The leadership of an opposition group is often safe but the support base is being harassed." Mrs Majitu of the Hundee organisation also sees a slight improvement: "In some villages the women have put a stop to the old custom. Elders have admitted that abduction is not part of Oromo tradition. In those villages the number of abductions is decreasing."

## Ethnic federalism

Ethiopia has 76 ethnic groups speaking some 280 languages and dialects. The Oromo have considered themselves underdogs since their subjugation by King Menelik II in the nineteenth century. They regard the Amhara, the second largest group, and Tigrayans, the fifth largest group, as dominant. These two have delivered most rulers to the country. Under Emperor Haile Selassie and Colonel Mengistu, Ethiopians were encouraged to adjust to the language and culture of the dominant Amhara. Many ethnic groups however felt discriminated against.

The new government has opted for a new policy called ethnic federalism, which was set out in the 1995 constitution. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia consists of nine autonomous regions. The regions have been defined roughly along linguistic lines and economic and political power has been decentralised. Each region has its own parliament, president and limited budget. The constitution even allows for secession of individual regions or nationalities. Some major ethnic groups, for example Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromo and Somali, now have their own regions. Four regions are conglomerates of various ethnic groups, and it is here that most problems arise.

Reactions to this ethnic federalism have been mixed. The Tigrayans are satisfied; they are at the centre of power. Many Oromo, Somali, Afar and other groups, which were not and still are not powerful in Ethiopia, have appreciated the government's decision too. Others oppose ethnic federalism. The Amhara are the most outspoken. Many of them had lived for decades as government officials or landowners in areas now assigned to other ethnic groups. They were forced to migrate to their own region and often lost property.

Other Ethiopians, who do not bother so much about their ethnic identity, were simply confused. "My father is Amhara, my mother Oromo, and the woman I have married is Eritrean. I was born and bred in an Oromo area. I am an Ethiopian, but they wanted me to move to the Amhara region where I do not know anyone." The man who told me this story is well educated, but has ended up in Addis Ababa doing unskilled jobs.

Others say the government has used ethnic federalism to favour the less than four million Tigray. Many higher officials in non-Tigray regions come from Tigray. State Minister for Finance and Economic Development, Mulu Ketsela, disagrees with this criticism. "In many regions there is a lack of local qualified administrators or of people loyal to the government's policies," she says.

According to one study, companies controlled by or associated with the ruling party play a dominant role in the economy. Merera Gudina claims that "the classic state-controlled economy has been translated into a party-controlled economy". He and others argue that genuinely private companies such as Ethiopian Amalgamated Fertiliser Company were forced out of business. People close to the ruling party deny strong links between their party and business.

It is difficult to reach a conclusion about the government's handling of poverty, multi-ethnicity and the culture of intolerance, or to assess the extent of exclusion and national cohesion. The implementation of all the government's good intentions remains weak, especially in distant places and in multi-ethnic areas. It has to break with a culture of intolerance and hierarchical thinking, shaped under the feudal Emperor Haile Selassie and the military Mengistu Haile Mariam. That cannot be done overnight. Shortage of qualified people is a serious problem and the debate about how to deal with the country's multi-ethnicity is far from over. ■

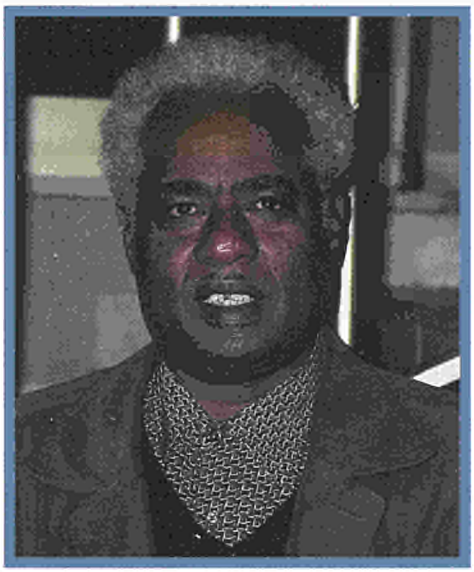
Oromo women meeting with Hundee facilitator

## Two decades in government and civil society

# A perspective from Oromya

Zegeye Asfaw is a former government minister from the Oromo region (the Oromya regional state now covers a huge swathe of west, central and southern Ethiopia). His involvement in government dates back to 1974 when the Emperor Haile Selassie was deposed by a Marxist military junta. Initially he helped to prepare the "Land Reform Proclamation" and became minister for land reform. Later he disagreed with the policies of the military leader, Mengistu Haile Mariam, and was a political prisoner for ten years, from 1979 to 1989.

In 1991 the Mengistu regime was finally overthrown by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) under Meles Zenawi, the current prime minister. After years of war and famine there was hope in Ethiopia. Zegeye Asfaw became minister of agriculture in a coalition in which he represented the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). Much to his regret the OLF broke with the government after only a year and he had to resign this post (the OLF subsequently evolved into an armed movement and has been fighting a guerrilla war for self-determination). Zegeye Asfaw then started Hundee, an organisation for the development of his own Oromo people, who make up some 40 per cent of the country's population.



***Has Ethiopia made any progress during the past decade or so?***

Yes, but to explain that I have to go back into history. When emperor Menelik II subjugated the Oromo areas in the second half of the nineteenth century, he appointed a mere handful of feudal lords in our region and degraded the Oromo to powerless tenants. The Land Reform Proclamation[1] after 1974 nullified this subordination. This was a milestone in Ethiopia's history.

***Did it really change much? Within a few years the peasants were paying huge taxes, and forced labour for the Emperor's nobles was replaced by forced membership of peasant associations.***

That is correct. The Land Reform Proclamation was only a beginning. The Mengistu government did reform agriculture, but then relied too much on industrialisation and large-scale agriculture. Mengistu also wanted to take a gamble with socialist cooperatives and collectives and with the grain quota system. He recruited young people to the war fronts in massive numbers. As a result he lost the support of the peasants. The resettlement of numerous peasant families, forced into villages, and other reforms in the 1980s did the rest. Only after 1991 was the peasant family recognised as the backbone of this country's economy.

***The reports of the UN Emergency Unit on Ethiopia show that hard times have continued for peasants. Poor peasants who borrow through the government's micro-credit schemes end up in jail if they cannot repay these loans.***

My admiration goes to the present government as it has kept defending the state ownership of land. It requires strength to resist the calls by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to privatise the land. If the land were privatised, well-to-do people from other ethnic groups might come to Oromya, buy the best land and chase away the Oromo peasants.

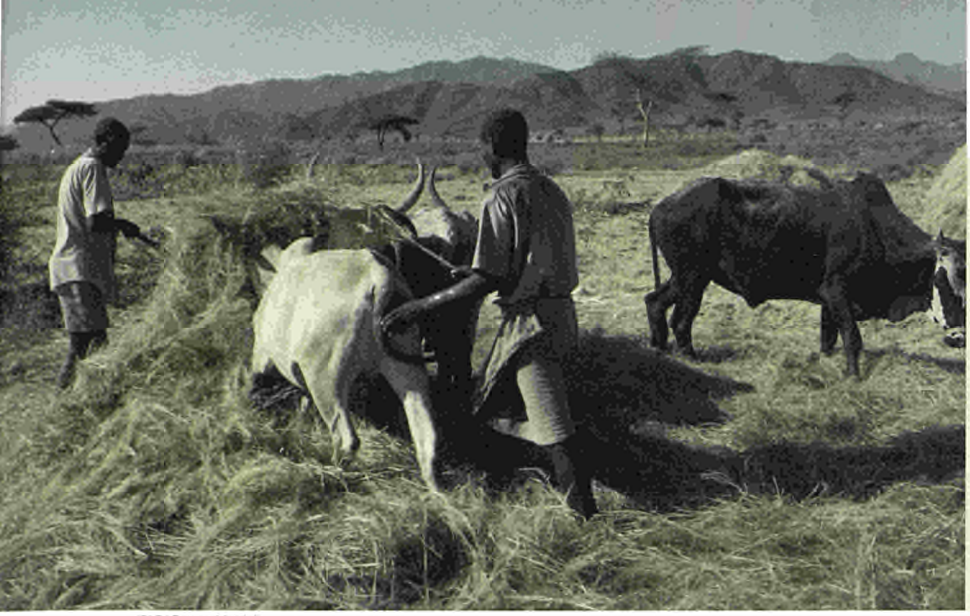
As far as the micro-credit policy of the government is concerned, peasants obtain farm inputs through government-sponsored loan arrangements. The downside is what follows when peasants fail to discharge their obligations. Temporary imprisonment has become a way of squeezing them to repay the loans. What we see is civil liability being addressed through imprisonment.

***Have there been other milestones in the country's recent history?***

In the area of regionalisation – the division of the country into regions based on language and ethnicity – progress has also been made. During the empire and the Mengistu regime there was no recognition of distinct regions or ethnic groups. The slogan was "Ethiopia is one". Differences were denied. I consider the division of the country into regions after 1991 as a second milestone. The constitution offers ethnic groups equal opportunities to develop themselves.

***Many people argue that Tigray region, where the Prime Minister and most EPRDF strongmen come from, benefits much more than other regions.***

I know that. Many Tigrayans work in the administration of non-Tigrayan regions. That could create problems. At the same time the advantage goes to a group that is well organised, well disciplined and has a purpose. In other



IFAD/ Franco Mattioli

**Rehabilitation programme for drought affected areas.**
**Agriculture is the backbone of Ethiopia's economy.**
**Almost 90 per cent of Ethiopians live in rural areas and more than half of export earnings in the country comes from agriculture.**
**Land tenure is a contentious issue in Ethiopia. Farmers have the right to use land and to transfer that use to their children, but they cannot own it.**

places there is polarisation and politics has not yet settled down. Tigray region has a much stronger absorption capacity. But I believe that a lot could be done to improve the livelihood of many people, including the Oromo.

***Do you see yourself first of all as an Ethiopian or as an Oromo?***

I am an Ethiopian and at the same time a proud Oromo. I am quite sure that the question of the Oromo and other ethnic groups has to be solved in the present Ethiopian setting. I know that radical elements in the OLF will not like me saying this, but neither violence nor a separate Oromya is an answer to Ethiopia's problems.

***What are Ethiopia's biggest problems?***

Apart from population pressure, it is backwardness, the inability to feed our own people, and the failure to live together in one nation. We have no leaders. I asked someone; "What is a leader?" He said: "It is the *uomo universale* (universal man)". We lack them.

***Some go as far as to argue that Ethiopia is engaged in a dialogue of the deaf.***

Absolutely. Everybody wants to push his own perspective. Even if there is a dialogue, people do not listen. If you are born in a culture of abundance, you can pay attention to one another. In Ethiopia you rejoice at the misfortune of your neighbours. There is no empathy. Here they come with an idea and it is non-negotiable. All Ethiopians have their histories. The way we are socialised goes against dialogue.

***Human rights activist professor Mesfin Wolde-Mariam argues that Ethiopians let tensions build up, without discussing them, and then at a certain stage it is too late. The worst example of this was the border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea (1998-2000), in which between 70,000 and 100,000 people died.***

That is true. There used to be traditional institutions to solve small conflicts. If two are in conflict at the rural level, a third party will call for the elders. At the regional and national level this does not work. There is no early warning system.

***Does Ethiopia suffer more from a culture of intolerance than other African countries?***

Ethiopia is very tolerant in religion. Take the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. On the one hand the Church was an instrument for Menelik II to conquer the Oromo areas, but at the same it has been tolerant towards other religions, including traditional religious practices, Islam and other Christian denominations. For the first time in recent history this tolerance is in danger. I fear that fundamentalism among young people has to be watched carefully. Many young Muslims are turning away from the traditional Islam and towards the "true" Islam.

***Do you, as a member of civil society, feel there is a lack of tolerance?***

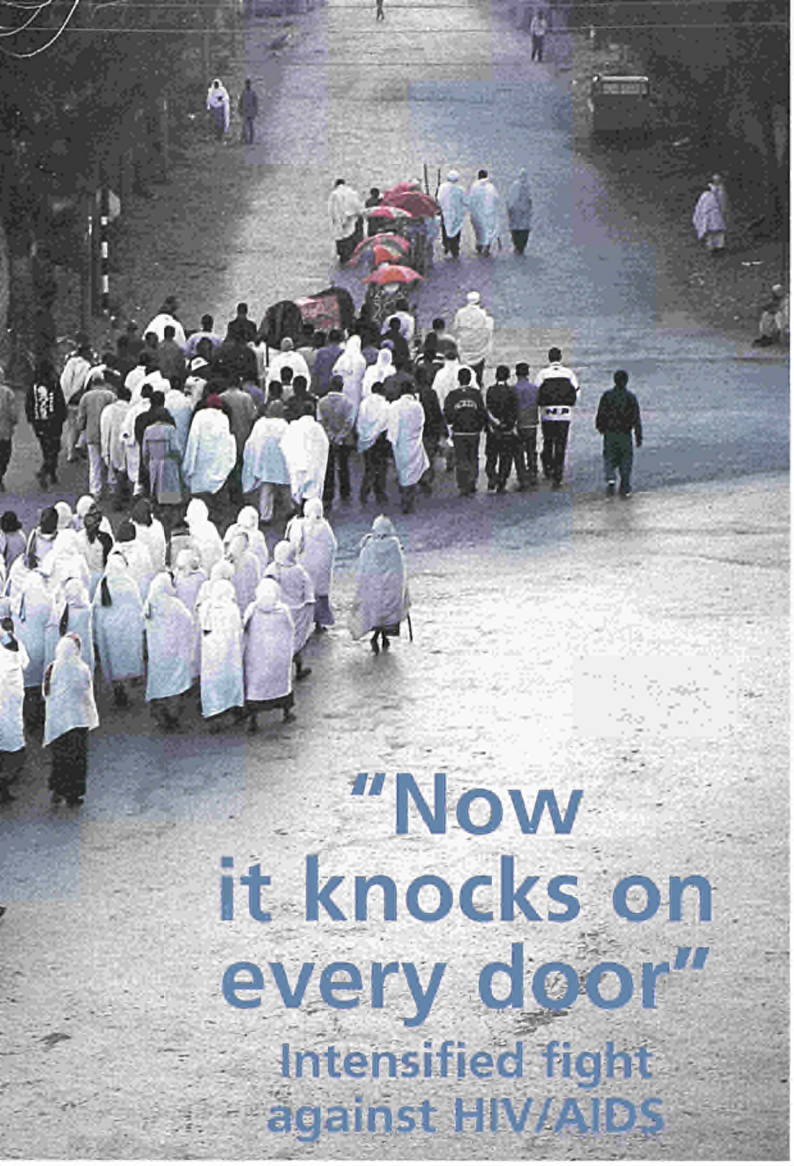
Generally there has been a tremendous improvement for civil society. NGOs in Ethiopia now have their own code of conduct. There is a government-NGO forum. The process of registering NGOs has become simpler. At the same time, and this matters for Hundee very much, the government still holds to the old belief that all Oromo who are not member of the pro-government Oromo party (OPDO) are members of the underground OLF. This is absolutely wrong.

***Is Ethiopia making progress in good governance?***

There are still big bottlenecks. A new ministry for capacity building has been set up. The necessary steps are being taken. But if you see the level of corruption… some big fish have been caught, but there are so many smaller ones. The structures are there, but the reality lags far behind.

You should understand that most countries in the South have been fighting for good governance since their independence. The discussion on this issue, initiated by the World Bank and other donors a few years ago, is not at all new for us. For me a few things matter. First of all that good governance comprises more than a good government; at least two other actors are involved: the private sector, but that is rather small in Ethiopia, and civil society. Secondly good governance means that the ordinary civilian gets the chance to articulate his problems and is helped to look for solutions. And thirdly one has to understand the search for good governance of a country such as Ethiopia. It is not static but always developing. Donors should understand this and broaden their dialogue to embrace the whole of Ethiopian society. ■

1. The Land Reform Proclamation of March 1975 nationalized all rural land, abolished tenancy, and granted each peasant family so-called "possessing rights" to a plot of land not to exceed ten hectares.



# "Now it knocks on every door"

## Intensified fight against HIV/AIDS

Ethiopia has the third largest number of people in the world with HIV/AIDS: some three million people are living with the virus, according to the United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). The "slim disease" (so-called because the major symptoms are weight loss and diarrhoea) was taboo for a long time, even for the government. More than half of those infected are women (1.6 million) and the prevalence rate among adults is 10.6 per cent.
In 1998 the government stepped up its campaign by adopting a comprehensive HIV/AIDS policy.

It is eight o'clock in the morning outside one of the public health centres in Addis Ababa. Two actors and two actresses, who look like patients, try to attract the attention of the people waiting to see a doctor or nurse. When enough of them show interest the actors begin their performance. A young woman rents a room in a family. After a few weeks she tells the owner's wife and the son that she is sero-positive and has been rejected by her own family. When the father learns this, he panics. Should the tenancy be terminated immediately? No one should touch the glass and the plate of the woman any more! After the mother and the son have explained repeatedly that the woman became HIV-infected as a result of rape, he agrees to let her stay. The audience, by now about a hundred, reacts enthusiastically. The actors, local amateurs who earn five birr per performance, work here every morning. A similar play is performed every day in the other 20 public health centres in the Ethiopian capital.

According to UNAIDS three million Ethiopian adults and children are HIV infected. Many of them have developed symptoms of AIDS. Two areas in the country are particularly affected. One is between Bahr Dar in Amhara Region and Awassa in Oromo Region, an area with many urban centres including the capital Addis Ababa. The other is in Tigray Region, where AIDS has become much more prevalent since the border war with Eritrea. Ethiopia has, after South Africa and India, the third largest number of people with AIDS in the world.

As in most countries, the virus primarily affects the most productive and most sexually active age group (15-49). 10,6 per cent of this group is HIV infected. The disease has therefore become a factor hindering the development of the country, although the impact of the pandemic has been mapped only fragmentarily. In 1999, 280,000 Ethiopians died of the slim disease. It is estimated that the average national life expectancy will be reduced to 42 years by 2010, while it would be 55 in the absence of the virus. Since the availability of statistical information about the disease in 1989, 1,2 million children have become orphans. Research has been done among female sex workers. Three-quarters of them in Addis Ababa are infected with the disease. In other major urban centres the proportion is around two-thirds. One out of every five pregnant women who visit an urban public health clinic is HIV-infected. Managers at both government and private sector level complain about empty desks, as educated and experienced workers die of AIDS.

### National response

Until a few years, the disease was taboo. The alarming figures did not alert the government, which spent only twenty per cent of a sixty million US$ World Bank soft loan to fight the disease. That has now changed. The government adopted in 1998 a HIV/AIDS policy, which was updated through the Strategic Framework for the National Response to HIV/AIDS. The policy aims to reduce the level of HIV transmission by 25 per cent within five years. It includes improving the quality of public services and access to them, dealing with sexually transmittable diseases, de-stigmatising persons living with HIV/AIDS, and promoting the use of condoms. Religious, business and community leaders are encouraged to support the new strategy.

"There was a big need for such a policy", explains Tedla Mekonnen, Ethiopian coordinator of the Sexually Transmitted Infections Prevention and Treatment Programme, which Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF-Belgium) runs in close cooperation with the government. The European Union funds the programme. "The number of deaths has increased seriously and the impact of the


Billboard at Makelle University, Tigray

pandemic has become very visible, especially in families where the breadwinner has died."

The morning plays in the 21 metropolitan public health centres, and also in centres in the capital's university, its prison and among female sex workers, are part of the efforts to reduce the infection rate. The 'risk perception' of most individuals remains low. "Awareness-raising is crucial," says Tedla Mekonnen. "Many people still think that they – in spite of risky behaviour – can avoid the infection. At this moment ninety per cent of the population knows about the disease. But the number of people who do not know whether they are HIV-infected is equally high. People scarcely have any testing done. Even if they allow it, some of them do not want to hear the result." The City Administration and MSF-Belgium want to include other groups in the programme, such as bus drivers, truck drivers, factory workers and merchants.

Nowadays HIV/AIDS programmes often get the explicit support of religious leaders of both Muslims and Christians. Ethiopian President Girma Wolde Giorgis has repeatedly reminded the population that people living with HIV/AIDS should not be discriminated against or stigmatised, nor their human rights violated. "To love them and show them our affection is morally more appropriate."

## Support from other sectors

The Arkaki Fibre Factory in the industrial city of Nazaret (30 km southeast of Addis Ababa) is one of the factories which has responded positively to the new HIV/AIDS policy. Every three months its workers have a medical check-up. The statistics that are gathered help to define national trends of the disease. The workers are made aware of the risk of infection – for instance through performances by Circus in Ethiopia, a group which combines circus acts with educating spectators on the risks of HIV/AIDS and other issues. "After the performance especially the female factory workers raise questions", says one of the managers. "They ask whether HIV is a virus or a parasite? Does AIDS have light and serious manifestations, like hepatitis? How quickly does one die of it?"

The Ministry of Defence has special information programmes on HIV/AIDS. Dr Mekonnen knows them well. "During the border war with Eritrea (1998-2000) numerous women travelled to the border cities in the north to make money. Many of them were not older than 14 or 16. They were poor and adventurous. The soldiers see themselves as heroes, who might not live long. They have the money. Together with the displaced they are the highest risk group in a war situation. This led to a serious increase in the number of infections."

Nurse Eftu Ahmed is responsible for information, education and communication in the MSF programme in Addis Ababa. In the main towns, she argues, the danger lies elsewhere: "The bottleneck is casual sex. Men who want to sleep with a woman for one night. If the girl asks him to use the condom, he will grumble 'Don't you trust me?' or 'One does not eat a toffee which is still wrapped in paper'".

What they and many others in the medical sector worry about is that few people come to clinics of their own accord to ask for advice or a test. "Voluntary counselling and testing, or VTC, is rare", says Eftu Ahmed. "There are private clinics, where this is possible, but they are too expensive for the majority of the people. VTC is available now in very few public clinics. Considering the magnitude of the problem, this is a drop in the ocean."

In a northern Ethiopian town a funeral procession is on the move towards the main church. Priests and deacons, wrapped in colourful church robes, accompany the coffin. Male relatives follow, while tens of women, dressed in white, constitute the end of the procession. "I know the deceased. Nobody will admit what he has died of," someone tells me. Is it AIDS? He nods. The next day the man takes me to his home for a coffee ceremony, prepared by his wife. "When I got to know her in 1995, she was a virgin. I myself had had several experiences. During our engagement we agreed not to have sex during the first year." His wife is listening attentively. "As none of us fell ill of the disease, we decided it was not necessary to have a test. I do not have any more affairs with other women." Nowadays relatives and friends of this couple first have tests when they want to marry. If it turns out that neither is infected, they marry. "The risk has become too big. AIDS knocks on every door. In both our families people have died of the disease." The man works in a company with some two hundred employees. Nine of them are known to have died from the disease. ■

Theatre performance about HIV/AIDS outside a clinic in Addis Ababa

# Preserving Ethiopia's cultural heritage

Rock-hewn church in Lalibela

Rock paintings, rock-hewn churches, monasteries, palaces, mosques and fortifications give Ethiopia a rich and varied heritage. Six sites are on UNESCO's World Heritage list. Ethiopians are proud of these treasures, but the condition of many sites and objects does reflect the country's poverty. Much has disappeared and the country is now making an inventory of its most important treasures, seeking the return of stolen objects and putting in place a scientific conservation policy.

Axum is Ethiopia's oldest city and, for Christians, its holiest. It has stunning antiquities. Visitors who have archaeologist Haile Selassie Berhe as a guide are lucky. His tour starts before noon in the archaeological museum and finishes after sunset in a famous field of stelae (standing stones) on the outskirts of Axum. "Between Axum and the Eritrean border there are 48 archaeological sites. Less than ten per cent of what is hidden in the sites has been discovered," he says.

The first site is a small locked shelter. Inside is a large stone with inscriptions beginning "I am King Erzana…" in Ge'etz (the language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church), Arabic and Greek. "During the reign of Erzana," says Haile Selassie Berhe, "the first Christian church was built in Ethiopia. Christianity arrived earlier here than in many European countries" (in the first half of the fourth century). The Axumite Empire stretched as far as Yemen and Sudan and the first kings lived here 3,000 years ago. On the wall of the shelter hangs a memorial plate with the names of the three farmers who found the stone slab. "A good relationship with the local people is a precondition for the preservation of cultural heritage".

The next sites show how thoroughly the work of preservation is being done; burial chambers of ancient warrior kings; the 52-room palace of the Queen of Sheba, who is said to have given birth to Ethiopia's first King of Kings, Menelik I; a cemetery on the opposite side of the road; and the tomb of Menelik himself. All have been described in detail. Pictures have been taken and detailed studies have been made. "We closely cooperate with western archaeologists and depend upon the money they bring in", says Haile Selassie.

## The Ark of the Covenant

King Erzana was the founder of the fourth century St Mary Zion church, destroyed during the Muslim domination of Ethiopia in the sixteenth century. A new church was built and its sanctuary chapel contains Ethiopia's most precious religious object: the "Ark of the Covenant" (believed by the Church in Ethiopia to be the original sacred chest of the Hebrews – the outward sign of God's

St Mary of Zion Church, Axum. The icons and wall paintings are of a rare beauty

covenant with the people of Israel). It used to be taken out of the chapel for processions, but for quite some time this has only been done during the timkat (Epiphany) ceremony in January. Its origin and authenticity are considered in Graham Hancock's controversial book, *The sign and the seal: a quest for the lost Ark of the Covenant.*

"One guard is responsible for the Ark. He is there for all his life. No, he will not be willing to show it", says Haile Selassie, who is a devout Christian himself. Close to the chapel some gold and silver ritual objects are on display. The golden crowns are impressive. "Three hundred Ethiopian rulers have been crowned in this church", says the guide. The main church is open to visitors, though only men are allowed in. The icons and wall paintings are of a rare beauty. Most of the colours were made from vegetable dyes. One particular red is from a vegetable that apparently does not exist any more and which no one knows how to reproduce.

The stelae field is dominated by a solid block of granite, 23 metres high. This obelisk is accredited to King Erzana. The longest one lies shattered on the ground. "In this region there are 3,000 stelae. The only support they have is a stone in the back and one in the front. Most were taken from a spot a few kilometres from here." How were they transported? "This area used to be savannah with many elephants. These animals dragged the stones."

Between the standing and the fallen stones is a large hole. "This place is awaiting a stela that is still in Rome in front of the FAO headquarters. Mussolini's soldiers took it after they had occupied Ethiopia in 1935", says Haile Selassie. It was recently damaged by lightening. In Addis Ababa the Italian ambassador later confirmed that the governments of both Ethiopia and Italy had agreed on its return. "Experts from both sides are discussing the repair and restoration of the obelisk. The restoration will be done in Italy. Then the obelisk will be returned." The ambassador admits that its return will have taken a long time.

### Conflicting views

According to UNESCO and INTERPOL, an inventory can be crucial in tracing stolen treasures. "Many churches have been emptied already", says the French expert, Jacques Mercier. Together with Ethiopian scholar Girmay Elias (who died recently) he was responsible for an EU-funded survey and inventory of the treasures of churches and monasteries in the Amhara and Tigray regions. "Priests and monks are not aware of the value of the manuscripts, icons, crosses and other ritual objects."

Mercier and Girmay visited 345 churches, which is less than ten per cent of the total number in these two regions. "Priests are not used to showing their precious objects to outsiders. It took a long time before they would do so. We have taken photographs of the most precious ones and described the site, their dimensions, the materials they are made of, and the name of the first owner."

However, the Ministry of Culture and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church would not accept the explanatory notes that had been added to the inventory. Mercier explained:

## The theft of Lalibela's healing cross

In the heart of the majestic mountains of northern Ethiopia, in the city of Lalibela, there are eleven churches. They are remarkable as they have been carved out of the rocks. The major church, the Medhane Alem, harbours one of Ethiopia's most precious treasures, the Afro Ayigeba, a heavy, richly decorated cross, 60 centimetres long. Its value is not only religious and historical, but Ethiopians also ascribe healing power to it. Two men permanently guard it.

Despite this, in a night of confusion – 9 March 1997 – with one guard off sick and the other asleep, the cross was stolen. For days the theft was front-page news in Ethiopia. Despite a confession soon after the initial investigation, it was not until two years later that the police traced it. They discovered that it had been smuggled out of Lalibela to an antique dealer in the neighbouring city of Desi, and from there had been sold to an antique dealer in the Ethiopian capital. This dealer had kept it hidden for a year, and then sold it on to a Belgian collector for $25,000.

The Ethiopian Embassy in Brussels engaged a Belgian lawyer, who advised that legal proceedings would take years, and it would be very difficult to prove the bad faith of the buyer. Instead negotiations took place and agreement was eventually reached on its return. The precious cross was flown back to Addis Ababa, where experts concluded that it was indeed the 800-year-old cross of Lalibela.

The Belgian collector, who had visited Ethiopia several times and was interested in Ethiopian artefacts, must have known about the theft of the magic cross and its value for Christians in the country. But the price for its return was that no further action would be taken against him – and he even got his money back – while in Ethiopia seven people were jailed for several years.

"I wrote that not all eleven rock-hewn churches had always been churches. Possibly one or two had been used as houses for the priests. This observation was not new. We had also argued that foreigners might have been involved in the building of the churches of Lalibela. Other scholars have concluded the same thing. We also differed about the dating of some objects. For example church dignitaries might claim that a cross dated from the fourth or sixth centuries, while in reality it was not more than one hundred and fifty years old."

Jara Hailemariam, general manager of the Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage, strongly disagrees with Mercier. "Mercier is undermining our tradition. He wants to correct a history that only we know." Mr Jara has written a paper challenging Mercier's conclusion that foreigners had imported building techniques and art works. "The clergy of Lalibela strictly adhere to the tradition to this day", he concludes. "To the priests and people of Lalibela, Mercier is no longer welcome." It is an interesting conflict between western scholarship and the right of a country to foster its own historiography, traditions and legends.

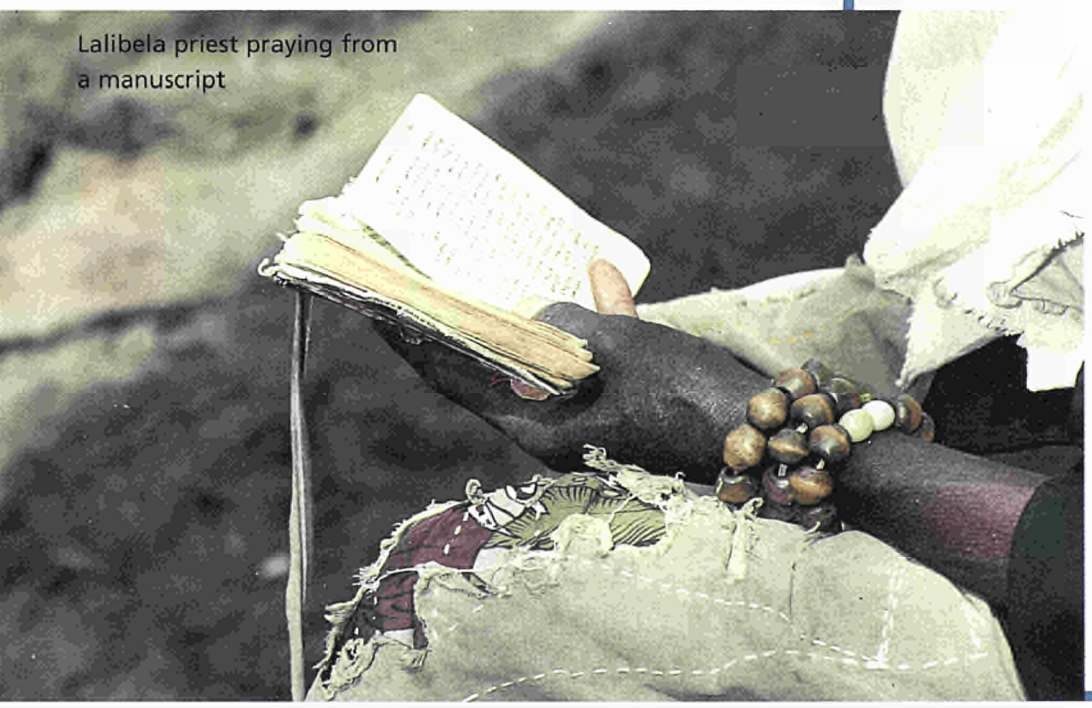
Conservation of sites and objects is a pillar of Ethiopia's preservation policy. The Government is worried about the condition of the roofs and walls of the rock-hewn churches in Lalibela. They are becoming porous and as a result humidity is reaching the icons and wall paintings on the inner walls. Most churches are in poor condition. Provisional shelters have been constructed to cover five of them, but there is an urgent need to replace them with more technically and aesthetically appropriate ones. The decision to do so was made several years ago and the European Union is willing to finance it, but so far no company – either Ethiopian or foreign – has been found to carry out the work. Mr Jara denies that it has anything to do with Ethiopian bureaucracy, which can scare off foreign companies. ■

## Manuscripts on microfilm

Some are small scrolls, others are sizeable books. They can be as old as the sixteenth century. Most of them are in Ge'etz, a few are in Arabic. The Christian ones contain hand painted illustrations of the Virgin Mary, St Michael, St George and other saints. Some of the stories depicted are unique illustrations of the country's history.

Through the centuries many manuscripts have left Ethiopia. The University of Leiden in the Netherlands received the first one in the early sixteenth century. During the 1980s they were sold in large quantities. "The situation in Ethiopia was bad at that time. Many churches and monasteries were willing to sell manuscripts", says Professor Jan Just Witkam of the Leiden University Library. He bought whole boxes, filled with old books and scrolls. "Because of the favourable prices and knowing that another box would follow, I accepted every parcel. I also bought a few manuscripts at Sotheby's and Christie's in London."

The university libraries of Uppsala and Leiden and the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin have presented microfilms of several hundred manuscripts to the Institute of Ethiopian Studies in Addis Ababa. Microfilm allows the institute to put together a comprehensive collection in Ethiopia, wherever the originals are housed. It can easily be reproduced and is ideal for research.



Lalibela priest praying from a manuscript

## The renovation of two palaces

The palaces of Menelik II in Addis Ababa and of Yohannes IV in Makelle are to be renovated. The two rulers are considered to have laid the foundation of modern Ethiopia.

The Menelik Palace was built in 1877, when the city of Addis Ababa was founded and has African, Arabic and Indian elements in its structure. The most beautiful part of the palace is the prayer house. It has the bedrooms of the Emperor and the Empress, the office of the Emperor's Minister of Defence, a Council building, a dining hall and a coronation hall.

The Palace in Makelle was built during the reign of Yohannes (1872-1889). It is a big square, stone structure – more like a defensive work than the Menelik palace. Austria will fund a feasibility study and the renovation. Austrian architects and restorers will work with Ethiopian experts. The project will take four-and-a-half years and cost around $13.5 million.

# Urgent need for more capacity

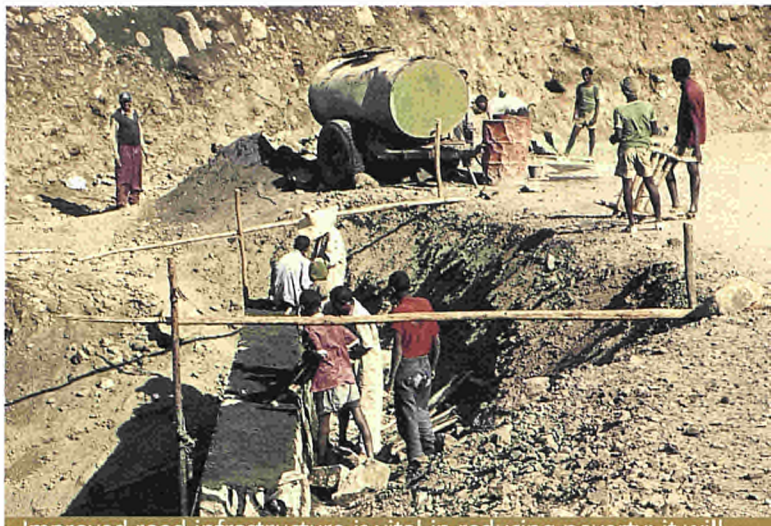
## Gradual expansion of the road network

Ethiopia has one of the least developed road networks in the world, and the lowest road density in Africa. Only twenty per cent of the land area is located within a ten km range of an all-weather road. Yet roads are the main means of transport, responsible for about 90 per cent of all passenger and freight movement. The condition of the road network is an impediment to the country's growth. Upgrading and expanding the road network is a top priority for the government, and vital for the country's development, trade and distribution of food aid.

Road infrastructure in the country had reached such a level of deterioration in the early 1990s that it became a serious obstacle to economic growth and development. Improving the road infrastructure is closely linked to poverty reduction: the bulk of agricultural production is by small-scale rural farmers, while markets and collection centres are located far from the producers, in urban centres. Improved accessibility of rural areas, including the main agricultural production centres, plays an important role in the fight against poverty and food insecurity. Opening up isolated pockets will allow the gradual economic, social and political integration of isolated populations.

Ethiopia's population is widely dispersed over remote villages, and almost 90 per cent of the population lives by cultivating the land. But the major urban markets are located at considerable distance from each other. Many farmers are unable to transport their surplus to a marketplace within a reasonable time. This is a disincentive to increase production. Due to limited market integration, major price differences frequently occur between surplus and deficit areas. Transport is time consuming. Buses, trucks and other means of transport suffer from the poor quality of the road surface. Relief operations become extra expensive and difficult.

The rehabilitation of the road network is a core element of Ethiopia's economic reform programme. More than one-fifth of the capital budget has been allocated to road construction and repairs. In 1996 the government initiated a 'Road Sector Development Programme' (RSDP), which is now in its second phase. It's objective is to restore much of the country's road network, improve the capacity of road management agencies, and provide affordable transport for the rural poor. ■



Improved road infrastructure is vital in reducing poverty; it will enable the rural population to have access to urban markets, and the road construction programme provides employment.

## RSDP II : programme objectives

The primary objective of RSDP II is to restore and expand Ethiopia's road network.

The physical target is to have, by 2007, 80%, 63%, and 60% of the paved, gravel and regional roads respectively in acceptable condition from the current average of 57%, and to selectively construct new roads.

RSDP II consist of a civil work programme including rehabilitation/upgrading of 3,669 km of all roads, new construction of 7,183-km roads, and improvement of bridges and structures. Included also is a road maintenance programme including periodic maintenance on 2,559 km of roads and routine maintenance on all types of roads. The programme incorporates institutional support to strengthen road management capacity for the Ethiopian Road Authority (ERA), Rural Roads Organisation (RRO), Road Fund Office (RFO), Domestic Construction Industry (DCI), Road Transport Authority's (RTA).

The programme, with a total cost of Birr 14,384.90 million is financed in parallel by donors and the government. Other donors are expected to join in providing the financial and technical support for this multifaceted programme. Out of the total required for the programme, the contribution of the government and road users is estimated at Birr 5,967.30 million.

**RSDP :**

- Priority has been given to restoration of the existing network (i.e. maintenance, rehabilitation and upgrading)
- Opening up of potential areas to development
- Improved maintenance financing
- Emphasis on using appropriate road maintenance and construction technology
- Commercialisation of ERA
- Improving rural transport services

## Book review

# *Ethiopia since the Derg:*

## *a decade of democratic pretension and performance**

### Mixed reviews of the first decade of democratisation

In May 1991 the army dictatorship of Mengistu's Derg was defeated by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Since then a process of political democratistion has taken place. In July 1991 a transitional government was established. The elections of May 2000 were the first fully contested elections in the history of the country. Ethiopia has built up a federal democracy and a formally democratic state structure. This book is an analysis of the first decade of the EPRFD regime.

Norway has had a professional presence in all elections in Ethiopia since 1992. This book presents the experience of Norwegian researchers on how democracy is working in practice. In Ethiopia the EPRDF is a significant advance on the previous Derg administration, say the authors. But they are critical of how far the process of political democratisation has fallen short of its original hopes.

How does one determine whether a country is democratic? For the authors the incidence and degree of fairness of elections is not the only measure. Two other criteria are civil rights and socio-economic rights: elections make little difference to people who are preoccupied with surviving. In Ethiopia, a dual system has developed; the formal pluralist structures, but a centralist party structure has evolved beneath it.

The leaders who came to power in 1991 promised democracy and fair elections. Each of the seven contributors to *Ethiopia since the Derg* has followed electoral processes in one particular region in Ethiopia. They are thus better informed than most observers, who arrive briefly before election day and stay for a short while. "Electoral processes cannot be evaluated and understood without a long-term presence in the country", they say.

*Ethiopia since the Derg* contains much original empirical material. It focuses on the elections held in 2000 and 2001 but also presents the wider context, covering issues such as gender, urban and rural contrasts, class and caste conflict, and environment.

### Party control

From a strictly formal point of view, democracy and democratic elections are guaranteed in Ethiopia. But the authors find that political parties sympathetic to the government are privileged, the opposition discriminated against. "All political parties are equal, but some are more equal than others", say the authors in a parody of the famous slogan in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* ("all animals are equal but some are more equal than others").

In Tigray, the region of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, someone quoted says that "the candidates are not elected to alleviate my problems. They are elected to be crowned as kings." Tigrayans are loyal to Prime Minister Meles Zenawi but at the same time they fear the ruling party and are unwilling to criticise it. The opposition is dispirited and disorganised. In other regions opposition parties often fail to participate in elections, fearing prosecution or intimidation. Their supporters are told they will not get seeds and fertiliser if they stick to their preferred party.

The line between free elections and influencing the voting public was often overstepped, the authors find. The ban on the presence of government officials and members of political parties in and around polling stations is often violated. In one station in an Oromo area "the election official was actually in the voting box". Once inside he took a voter's thumb and placed it on the name of the pro-government OPDO candidate.

### Some encouraging signs

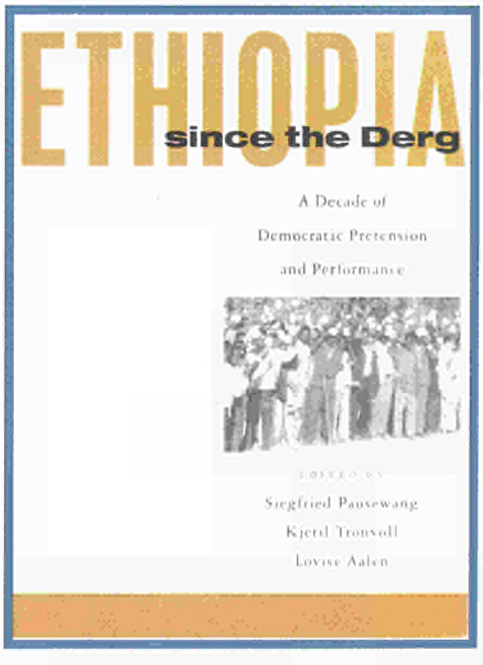
The authors also mention positive observations. Since 1991 the organisation of the elections, whether for the federal, regional or local level, has improved gradually but steadily. If fraud is proven, re-elections take place. After the regional and federal elections of 2000 this happened in 20 districts.

"Politics is fire" is a saying in Ethiopia. The few Ethiopians inside Ethiopia who express themselves about politics, mostly do so vehemently and are outspoken. There is little dialogue. Most people however prefer not to burn their fingers and in the voting booth they are guided by those in power. The socio-economic conditions are not conducive to democracy.

The authors of *Ethiopia since the Derg* did their research with the permission of the government. They have remained impartial in their reports.

The EPRDF made their own evaluation of the late 2001 local elections. Their conclusion is not mentioned in *Ethiopia since the Derg*. In Special Issue no 2 of *Tehads*, a bi-monthly of the EPRDF, the party presents its analysis of the local elections in the southern regions. "Undemocratic practices and the abuse of power committed by the leadership of our party at all levels have contributed more to the loss of public confidence in the party than any campaign by the opposition. In other words, we have been our own worst enemy."

The authors' conclusion is that only when the regime recognises its shortcomings will it create the conditions for substantive democratisation. ■




* Edited by Siegfried Pausewang, Kjetil Tronvoll, Lovise Aalen.
ZED BOOKS, London, 2002,
ISBN 1 84277 176 0 Hb - 1 84277 177 9 Pb.

# Ethiopia


## General Information

| | |
|---|---|
| Area (square km) | 1,104,000 |
| Population (million) | 67 |
| Rural population: | 85% |
| Capital: | Addis Ababa |
| Major towns: | Dire Dawa, Makelle, Gondar, Bahir Dhar, Dese, Harar, Nazaret, Debre Zeit, Jimma, Awassa, Shashemene. |
| Religion: | Christians (approximately 40%), of which most are Ethiopian Orthodox, Muslims (approximately 40% ), traditional religions; others. |
| Languages: | Amharic (national working language), Orominya, Tigrinya, Somali, Afar, etc. English and Amharic are used in business. |
| People: | Ethiopia has over 70 ethnic groups; Oromo (40%), Amhara (25%), Tigre (12%), Gurage (3.3%), Ometo (2.7%), Sidamo (2.4%). Other ethnic minorities include the Falasha, Nilotic tribes, the Beja, the Agau, the Shankella, the Somali and the Afar. |

## Political structure

| | |
|---|---|
| Official name: | Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia |
| Head of State: | President, Girma Wolde-Giorgis who has a largely ceremonial role. |
| National government: | The prime minister (Meles Zenawi) and his cabinet (Council of Ministers) appointed October 2001. |
| Main political parties: | The Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) evolved from the coalition of armed groups that seized power in May 1991. It includes the Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front, the Amahara National Democratic Movement, the Oromo People's Democratic Organisation. Several small parties exist. |
| Regions: | The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia consists of nine federal regions, the biggest being Oromya, representing more than half of the population. Regions are delineated roughly along linguistic borders, and have their own parliament, president and limited budget. A region is divided into zones, districts (Woreda), and Kebeles (urban municipalities) or peasant associations (rural). |

## Economy

| | |
|---|---|
| Currency: | The official currency is the Birr (Br) divided into 100 Cents. birr (rate: birr 8,57 = €1) |
| GNP per capita (US$): | 110 (2000) |
| GDP breakdown by sector: | Agriculture (49%); industry (7%); services (44%) |
| GDP growth rate : | 1.2% (2001/2002) |
| Total external debt (1998 US$): | 9.5 billion |
| Main export sectors: | coffee (60%), qat, hides and skins |

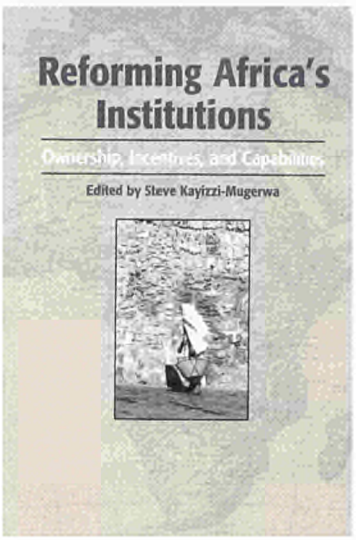
## Social Indicators

| | |
|---|---|
| Human Ethiopians below the US$1 per day poverty line: | 46% |
| Ethiopians below US$2 per day line: | 89% |
| Incidence of food poverty: | 56% in rural areas, 36% in urban centres. |
| Life expectancy at birth: | 43 |
| Adult literacy: | 44% (male), 33% (female) |
| Urban population: | 15% |
| Primary school enrolment: | 52% (boys), 52% (girls) |
| Population growth rate: | 2.3% |
| Infant mortality per 1.000 births: | 107 |
| Human development index rating: | 164 (out of 173) |

Sources: *Federal Government of Ethiopia, UNDP, EU, World Bank, Economist Intelligence Unit*

# Reforming Africa's Institutions:
## Ownership, Initiatives, and Capabilities

*Edited by Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa*




The Brussels secretariat of the ACP Group was the venue for the February 17 launch of this study, the outcome of a UNU World Institute of Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) project on African institutions and reform. It was presented by its editor Professor Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa, who directed the WIDER project.

The book looks at the degree to which recent reforms undertaken in sub-Saharan Africa have enhanced institutional capacities in government. It analyses to what extent reforms have been internalised and defended by governments, and considers the impact of public sector reforms on the economy. It also addresses the question of whether ownership can be attained when countries continue to be heavily dependent on external support.

There was not one African government that had not attempted public sector reforms in the past decade, including retrenchment, the study found. Governments no longer see themselves as the sole suppliers of social services, frequently opting for partnerships with the private sector. Efficiency and choice have entered the institutional language, the civil service is on the verge of transition, decentralisation is back on the agenda and there have been recent moves towards more open and democratic governments.

"Donor pressure has been a key ingredient in bringing about these reforms," says Kayizzi-Mugerwa. "Donors now only wish to aid governments that demonstrate genuine ownership of policies for poverty reduction. Nevertheless, efforts at improving capacities in the public sector in general, and in the civil service in particular, could ensure that future reforms will be driven from within."

The study found that African institutions remain conflict ridden, making it difficult to predict the future. "While reforms demand strong political leadership, successful institutional reforms are characterised by enthusiasm across the board and not just at the top," Kayizzi-Mugerwa says. "The most important question in the next decade will be how to create conditions that will enable institutional reforms to be generated from within Africa itself, with aid only acting as an additional resource for development, and without the confusing implications of aid conditionality." ■

## Worldwide access to information and knowledge

***International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP): Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI)***

Information and knowledge can play a vital role in development and the new information and communication technologies (ICTs) have potential within this. But there is concern that the gap between those who have access to information and those who do not is widening.

INASP is a cooperative network of partners aiming to improve worldwide access to information. It was established as a programme of the International Council for Science (ICSU) in association with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), UNESCO and the Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS).

INASP works with developing and transitional countries on a wide range of activities, including developing opportunities to access international information, providing access to and dissemination of local and regional research results and providing training in both internet use and in strengthening local publishing.

With a mandate of "worldwide access to information and knowledge", the objectives of INASP are to:

- map, support and strengthen existing activities promoting access to and dissemination of scientific and scholarly information and knowledge;
- identify, encourage and support new initiatives that will increase local publication and general access to quality scientific and scholarly literature;
- promote in-country capacity building in information production, organisation, access and dissemination.

INASP acts as an 'intermediary' between the research and information communities, NGOs and professional bodies in the South and their counterparts in the North.

### Programmes and activities

INASP-Health: http://www.inasp.info/health;
INASP-Rural Development: http://www.inasp.info/south/;
Library Support Programme: http://www.inasp.info/lsp/;
Publishing Support Initiatives: http://www.inasp.info/psi/;
Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI) http://www.inasp.info/peri/.

The PERI programme provides opportunities to access relevant and affordable literature. Because of the lack of sustainable research material, access to national and regional research has been very limited and researchers have found that the internet also provides a surplus of 'free' information of dubious authority.

PERI's aim is to support capacity building in the research sector in developing and transitional countries through strengthening the production, access and dissemination of information and knowledge.

INASP - 27 Park End Street, Oxford OX1 1HU, UK
Tel: +44 1865 249909 - Fax: +44 1865 251060 - E-mail: inasp@inasp.info - Web: http://www.inasp.info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Luxembourg
Netherlands
Portugal
Spain
Sweden
United Kingdom

**France**

Territorial collectivities

Mayotte
St Pierre and Miquelon

Overseas territories

New Caledonia
and dependencies
French Polynesia
French Southern and Antarctic
territories
Wallis and Futuna islands

**Netherlands**

Overseas countries

Netherlands Antilles:
Bonaire, Curaçao, St Martin,
Saba, St Eustache
Aruba

**Denmark**

Country having special
relations with Denmark

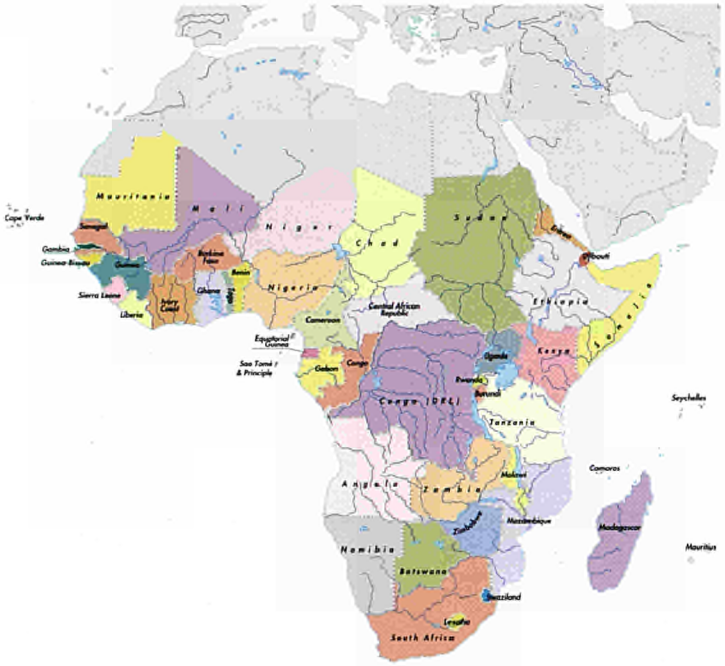
Greenland

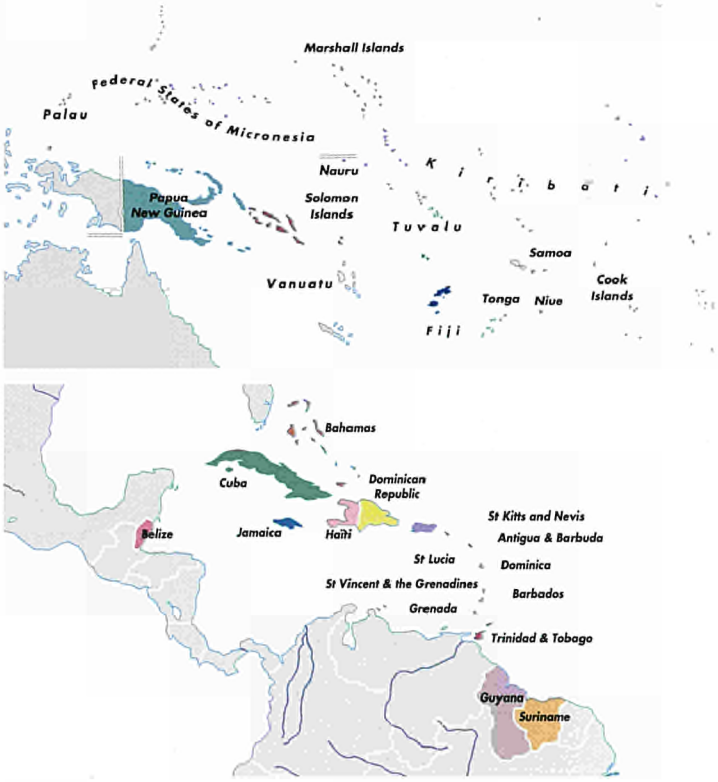
**United Kingdom**

Overseas countries and territories

Anguilla
British Antarctic Territory
British Indian Ocean Territory
British Virgin Islands
Cayman Islands
Falkland Islands
Southern Sandwich Islands
and dependencies
Montserrat
Pitcairn Island
St Helena and dependencies
Turks and Caicos Islands

# The European Union




# The 78 ACP States*

Angola
Antigua and Barbuda
Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
Benin
Botswana
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cameroon
Cape Verde
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros
Congo
Cook Islands
Côte d'Ivoire
Cuba*
Democratic Republic of Congo
Djibouti
Dominica
Dominican Republic
Equatorial Guinea
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Fiji
Gabon
Gambia
Ghana
Grenada
Guinea
Guinea Bissau
Guyana
Haiti
Jamaica
Kenya
Kiribati
Lesotho
Liberia
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Marshall islands
Mauritania
Mauritius
Micronesia
Mozambique
Namibia
Nauru
Niger
Nigeria
Niue
Palau
Papua New Guinea
Rwanda
St Kitts and Nevis
St Lucia
St Vincent and the Grenadines
Samoa
São Tomé and Principe
Senegal
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
Solomon Islands
Somalia
South Africa
Sudan
Suriname
Swaziland
Tanzania
Togo
Tonga
Trinidad & Tobago
Tuvalu
Uganda
Vanuatu
Zambia
Zimbabwe

* Cuba was admitted as a new member of the ACP group in December 2000, but is not a signatory of the Cotonou Agreement.

**General Secretariat of the ACP Group of States:** Avenue Georges Henri 451, 1200 Brussels, Belgium. Telephone: +32 2 743 0600

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