

Workshop no. and title: new victims of the food crisis – workshop 1

Main points of discussion:

We look at new victims of the food crisis, and new ways to deal with it.

Multilateral dept UM, finn Christensen.

Schiller institute.

Klaus Severn, university of CPH, geography student.

Jakobsen, roskilde university,

Aarhus university, organic livestock production. Interested in transition to sustainable solutions.

Mexican embassy. Want to hear experience

Morten Emil, DCA political adviser, DCA is involved in food crisis.

Susanne, ODI, 20 yrs on food assistance (used to do Chris Leather's job)

We start by looking at the basic issues, who what where how. Then with more experienced people we discuss the possible responses, the challenges and what can be done.

Definition (slide 1 Valerie): structural vulnerabilities and extreme poverty exacerbated by high food and fuel prices and at times compounded by shocks (climate, conflict, natural disasters).

Impact of high food crisis (slide 2), five points of impact of high food and oil prices. Increased vulnerability (80% of income in food). Irreversible impact on human development (change from more nutritious to less nutritious food, children underdeveloping physically). Unrest and political instability (demonstrations and riots; at least one country resulted in overthrow of the government, also a change in govt perception of WFP; govts requested WFP to feed their people and bolster safety nets-a new kind of dialogue). Fiscal impact (govts needed to make huge expenses importing food, at very high price levels, various response levels in terms of fiscal discipline). Reverse progress towards equitable trade (impact on export bans, export restrictions)

How many are affected? 932 million hungry people: 75 in 2007 million more than before (FAO; who are the official number-keeper against MDG1). Highest numbers in India, B'desh, China. One could achieve MDG 1 by only focusing on these top 3 countries.. but that would not deal with percentage of hungry as percentage of population, nor with sub-Saharan Africa.

130 million new hungry pushed into poverty in 2008. WFP used modelling. Country by country, what it would cost to achieve 1,800 Kcal minimum, in 2004, against income. Food basket repriced for 2008 against current income and income projections. Percentual changes were derived.

majority in sub-Saharan Africa; over 65 percent.

impact strongest in countries:

- highly dependent on income
- -facing inflationary pressure
- -majority population spends over 60% on food
- -vulnerable to disasters, conflict

most affected countries (map on Valerie's presentation).

Morten Emil: UNSG says one billion suffer hunger and an additional 2 billion suffer undernutrition.

WFP focus is somewhat more narrow, focusing on a percentage (10 to 20%) of the bottom 1 billion.

Net buyers of food (people that buy more than they grow): most urban populations; (slum dwellers, high density area marginals, day laborers). Rural populations (75% of the worlds poor live in rural

areas. Many needed to sell everything right after harvest. Then need to buy rest of the year, at increasing prices) Small holder farmers. Pastoralists (cattle traded for grain, fetched lots less grain). Women and children (given the critical importance in early years).

Responses to the high food prices:

MEET IMMEDIATE NEEDS: emergency assistance etc. Smallholder farmer food production boosted. Trade and tax policy adjusted. Macro economic implications managed.

BUILD LONGER TERM RESILIENCE and contribute to global food and nutrition security.

WFP response:

Meet increased operational costs

21 countries prioritised for new interventions

context specific action plans developed in partnership

scale up food assistance and launch innovative programmes

innovative programmes:

targeted free food in rural and urban

expanding school feeding

supplementary nutritious rations

voucher and cash transfers

FFW for agricultural production infrastructure and marketing

Small-scale food reserves

Help to small farmers to produce and sell nutritious food.

End of presentation

Q: can something be done politically to stop the speculation? And how can we make a new deal possible to help nations come back on their feet, like Marshall Aid? This will be a challenge posed to the group.

Q: who is benefiting from the increased food prices? In Asia, no one had an interest in high fluctuations. They even proposed a sort of food OPEC. Stable markets are key. Clearly those that don't benefit are the smallholders.

Q/comment: the regulations issue; at the global level, will the world in fact be changing regulations to deal with the global food crisis?

CHALLENGE: responding to food needs in an urban setting- what are the key challenges and proposed ways to address them?

Panel of three: humanitarian community has traditionally focused on rural populations. Key challenge: targeting. In rural setting we focus on local leaders that know everybody; the traditional targeting tools are not suitable. Challenge: traditional food assistance tools may not be sufficient: with vouchers, what shops would you select? Challenge: Income generating activities, complex in urban setting. Challenge: politics and urban regulations/restrictions (urban gardens may be illegal, small urban food business may be illegal). Focus could be on cutting out the middlemen; provide easy access around cities. Challenge: how to increase more social responsibility in the poor urban communities: you need to find activities that positively impact the existing social cohesion.

CHALLENGE: NEW RESPONSE INSTRUMENTS. Expanded cash and voucher programmes, reinvesting in agricultural production, physical and virtual food reserves. Challenge: what is new about these approaches, what is new about the food crisis or is it simply the same yet more of it. Challenge: can we get urban dwellers to pay a higher price for food, in a way that small farmers are guaranteed an income to their production. Instruments should be seen in a long term context. Challenge: urban dwellers are closer to the political power; furthermore large parts of urban populations are extremely poor and vulnerable. Challenge: the response is not so new but it is new in scale. Reinvesting, a re-focus of ODA in agriculture and local development is essential. Challenge: great difficulties in reaching the chronic poor. A much more comprehensive social protection system is needed. On WFP side the real new tool is the P4P programme empowering local producers for long-term production. Challenge: many different instruments are needed in as many different local settings. What is a solution in one place could increase the problem in another. Challenge: cash grants can create dependency as well. However, the same arguments for and against dependency can be used in food or cash. Challenge: food stock reserves: WB advice to govt's to get rid of their stocks is seen as having contributed to the high prices. So the issue of nat'l stocks should re-enter the agenda. Some kind of information system between produces and buyers.

Slettet: ¶

Main challenges identified:

Suggested actions: