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DAC Network on Poverty Reduction

POVNET PROGRAMME OF WORK 2011-12

Food Security

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POVNET PROGRAMME OF WORK ON FOOD SECURITY

Rationale

1. There has been significant global growth, largely led by developing countries, for most of the decade since the Millennium Summit in 2000. In many Least Developed Countries (LDCs), average annual GDP growth rates reached 6% or 7%, well above the rates of population growth. Despite these rises in aggregate income, household level survey data from many of these countries show stagnation in the livelihood economies of poor rural people and deteriorating diets and nutrition. The number of hungry people has been rising for the last 15 years even as average food commodity prices were falling, reaching a peak of over one billion in 2009 following the food, fuel and economic crises. Although the figure has now dropped to 925 million it is expected to rise further as a result of the latest rises in food commodity prices. For the first time in decades we have seen a rise in the proportion of the world's population going hungry. The rates of poverty in Africa are stagnant, the longer term trend in food prices is now rising and the numbers of poor people are increasing.

2. The central problem is that the economic growth in many LDCs is not happening in the livelihood and economic activities of the poor. Growth is concentrated in sectors of the economy such as mining and tourism, which do not directly involve the poor people. The rural economy, particularly smallholder agriculture, is not participating in growth. This sector supports the bulk of the population but contributes least to growth and, correspondingly benefits least from it. The weak performance of smallholder agriculture, particularly in basic food crop production, means that food supply is irregular and dependent on, often expensive, imports. Many rural households lack the incomes and assets necessary to feed themselves on an ongoing and sustainable basis. Both availability of and access entitlement to food are undermined.

3. Importantly, the lack of progress on rural livelihoods, income poverty and food security is now slowing progress in other MDG areas. In Tanzania, for example, despite significant investments in health and education by donors and government, the rate of health service usage among the poorest 20% of the population is falling and their primary school completion rates are half those of the better off.

4. Poverty perpetuates hunger and hunger perpetuates poverty. The evidence shows that under-nutrition in early childhood permanently limits physical and intellectual development in ways that cannot be compensated for by later improvements in nutrition. Feeding the 10 year old cannot undo the damage from years of under-nutrition in the womb and as an infant and toddler. Hunger transmits poverty to the next generation as the hungry child becomes, in turn, the irregular and underachieving pupil and the vulnerable and impoverished adult.

5. Accelerating progress on income poverty reduction, food security and nutrition is critical for not only achieving MDG 1 but also for sustainable progress across all MDGs. For this to happen:

- growth processes in developing countries need to become more inclusive of poor people as both the agents and beneficiaries of growth; and
- national and sectoral development plans must focus on delivering food security and nutrition impacts by identifying and delivering the development results in incomes and entitlement to food as well as production and availability.

6. Food Security is one of the focal areas of work for the OECD-DAC for the biennium 2011-12. It is also one of the pilots in the OECD DevGoals exercise and a key pillar of G20 work. This is reflective of the increased focus on hunger and food security in the development arena. Many DAC members, have signalled new initiatives and increased support for food security and agriculture, the multilateral system is being re-organised to deliver a more co-ordinated and effective response, the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative has placed food security at the centre of the global political agenda and regional initiatives, such as the African Union's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme and the AGRA initiative, will help support policy capacity and channel funds to national programmes.

7. The OECD-DAC has been mandated to track the commitments made under the l'Aquila Food Security Initiative and this work is part of a broader stream of OECD work for 2011-12 in support of OECD members' focus on food security. The work involves the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and the Trade and Agriculture Directorate (TAD) and has been integrated to the OECD's Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) as a workstream on Food Security being undertaken by the DAC's Network on Poverty Reduction (POVNET).

8. As well as the AFSI monitoring the workstream on food security includes two other linked elements:

- Guidance for donors on effective support for investment in agriculture and food security;
- Applying management for development results frameworks to support for food security.

Effective support for agriculture and Food Security:

9. The work will focus on national level policies and programmes. POVNET will draw on donors' experiences to provide practical guidance for donors and their Government partners on how to support the design and implementation of programmes and policy instruments that have been proven to deliver. Significant work is underway to build a more effective and better co-ordinated response to hunger and food insecurity at international and regional level through the CFS, the UNHLTF, the CFA, the CFS Panel of Experts, CAADP and AGRA. Refocused resources, which need to be spent well, will be available as a result of AFSI, GAPFS and the individual initiatives of a number of bilateral donors, to prioritise food security.

10. The success of these efforts, and especially the sustainability of their impact, will depend to a significant extent on the ability of donors and Government at the level of individual countries to come together behind good quality and realistic policies and programmes that address availability, access, affordability and nutrition. There is, however, a policy and planning deficit in agriculture and food security at country level on both donor and Government sides, a consequence of the relatively low priority accorded the sector over the last two decades. DCD seeks to address this critical gap and thus add value to the international effort through the POVNET work and thus contribute to and provide an important complement to the broader work being undertaken in the AFSI and other contexts.

Managing for development results:

11. The work will develop a specific food security approach to MfDR, a subject which is likely to be a key theme at the Busan meeting in November 2011 and an important element of G20 work. The objective is to produce guidance on the development and use of national and sectoral results frameworks that:

- identify priority nutrition impacts for specific target groups;

- lay out the results chains through which they are achieved; and
- provide the basis for programme review and management and donor-Government policy dialogue.

12. Building national capacities for the generation and analysis of evidence will be a critical area. MfDR and results based management are closely linked to accountability, both between donors and Government and to citizens and food insecure people. The POVNET work will provide advice on how accountability to the latter group can be built into donor and Government programmes.

Objectives and Output

13. The country level aid delivery context has evolved significantly over the last decade and many donors are re-emphasising support to food security in a situation where the respective roles of Government and donors and the relationships between them have changed. There is a greater emphasis on supporting Government policies and programmes and the recognition that food security must be addressed through promoting sustainable livelihoods as a priority component of economic development strategies, particularly in the informal and rural sectors and for women.

14. Donors supporting food security need to be able to engage and provide substantive inputs into country level policy processes to support the development of viable and realistic strategies to build food availability and entitlement and to ensure that the programmes to be implemented are adequately resourced. Donors need to be able to use a range of modalities and dialogue processes. Dialogue in Agriculture sector policy and programme planning processes will be key for raising household incomes and agricultural productivity, but will need to be supported by setting and monitoring national level targets in PRSs, and in the Performance Assessment Frameworks (PAF) linked to General Budget Support (GBS). The availability of adequate resources from the national budget and their appropriate and proper use will require a specific focus in the budget process, in Public Expenditure Tracking studies and in support of statutory oversight bodies. Good quality, nationally generated and owned data on income, food production, availability, prices and consumption, and nutrition outcomes are essential for discussing the design and impact of public programmes and for promoting public debate and accountability to citizens.

15. Policy engagement on food security and nutrition goes beyond agriculture and economic development. Priorities and targets in the health and education sectors are particularly important and social protection programmes involving food or cash transfers are key instruments for both short term impacts and for promoting sustainable livelihoods.

16. The piloting of innovative approaches and the replication and scaling up of successes into national programmes will be important for reaching marginalised and vulnerable groups and the informal economy. (WFP 'swipe cards', being piloted in Ethiopia to increase the affordability of food and support local producers, is an interesting example of innovative approaches to delivering on this objective.)

17. Donors need to be able to use NGOs and other partners to develop approaches that support small-scale private entrepreneurs and producers organisations and reach into communities. Supporting and drawing evidence and good practice from these types of projects will help strengthen the effectiveness of national programmes.

18. The output of the work will be a report that provides a donor who plays a leading role on food security and nutrition at country level with a toolkit and checklists for supporting the development and delivery of effective public policies and programmes within the current aid context.

Organisation

19. A first step will be a survey of donors and literature review to build a profile of current donor engagements and approaches at country level across the relevant modalities and processes. This survey will identify some examples and areas of good practice and evidence from studies and evaluations that can be used in developing the toolkit final report and will show up gaps and opportunities for developing tools for stronger engagement.

20. Evalunet in collaboration with the Netherlands is starting work on a Synthesis of Evaluations and Evaluative Studies on Food Security. There will be the opportunity to feed into the preparation and implementation of this study so that its outputs can provide material for the POVNET work.

21. Food Security, agriculture and rural development are a potential theme for discussion at the Busan HLF on Aid Effectiveness. Proposals on this have been submitted by DCD and the Global Donor Platform on Rural Development. If this theme goes ahead, POVNET should provide inputs on food security results chains as part of its work on MfDR.

22. Food Security has been identified as one of the pilot areas in the OECD DevGoals process. A horizontal OECD working group will be established to develop an OECD wide Development Goal on Food Security. Again, the POVNET work on food security results chains will feed into this process.

23. It is proposed that POVNET establish a contact group on Food Security to provide inputs and feedback to the initial survey and information collection exercise, to facilitate contacts and evidence gathering from members and other relevant actors, and support the development of the final report. This group will operate using e-mail, electronic discussion fora and video conferencing – but will meet physically when necessary.

Issues for discussion / Next Steps

- Do you agree with the proposed approach for this workstream?
- Would the proposed outputs be useful to your country level colleagues - are you increasing your focus in the area of Food Security? Do you have suggestions for strengthening the added value and relevance for your organization?
- Are you aware of work (evaluations, reviews, studies, guidelines) that your organization has undertaken or commissioned that would contribute to this workstream?
- How can we bring in a developing country perspective to this discussion?
- Would you or your agency be interested in joining and contributing to a contact group to support the work on Food Security?