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Food and Agriculture in Africa

ECA/FAO Agriculture Division

Staff Papers No. 6



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FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT¹

"The problem of hunger can be broadly divided into two types, viz., (1) famines, and (2) endemic deprivation. Famines are transient but violent events - they come and go, decimating the population and causing extreme misery and widespread death. In contrast, endemic deprivation is a more persistent phenomenon, forcing people to live regularly and ceaselessly in a state of undernourishment, disease and weakness. While endemic deprivation is less fierce as a calamity, it is also more resilient and affects more people. If famines kill millions through starvation and epidemic diseases, endemic deprivation can affect hundreds of millions through debilitation and illness, increasing mortality rates and shortening people's lives."

(Amartya Sen, Public Action to Remedy Hunger, The Hunger Project, 1990.)

by E.P. Pallangyo²

I. INTRODUCTION

The first four years of the 1990s indicate that African economies have grown by a mere 1.5 per cent per annum - worse than during the "lost decade" of the 1980s when Africa's economic annual growth rate was on average 1.8 per cent during the period 1980-1990. This growth is barely half of the rate of growth of Africa's population and is well below the annual average growth target of 4 per cent set by the World Food Conference in 1974, and still worse than the 6 per cent set in the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. This trend of continuing decline in per capita income also continues to translate itself into a further slide into hunger and poverty. More than ever before, Africa needs serious and clear rethinking, and a demanding persistence and consistency in doing things for itself, jettisoning the temptation to rely on graphic images or pictures of misery and starvation to work on the

emotions of donors to arouse their sympathy and pity, spurring them into action to provide alms. The region will be challenged even more to increasingly rely on the generation of its own resources for development purposes, instead of waiting for foreign aid. Outside assistance can help but it must be teamed up with African resolve. Even the ancient Romans had a saying about "grants and gifts". "*Timeo dona ferentes*" - I fear bearers of gifts.

The low aggregate regional growth performance was the consequence of poor performance of the rural and agricultural sector which made only modest recovery. There is no gainsaying the fact that at the root of the continuing economic underdevelopment of Africa, its stagnation and decline lies the poor performance of this sector which has always been the most important single activity in African economies, and the food sector in particular as the data would show where over 70 per cent of the total

1 Paper presented at the Symposium on Agricultural Policies and Food Security in Eastern and Southern Africa", Nairobi, Kenya, 18-20 May 1994.

2 Mr. E.P. Pallangyo is Chief of the Food and Agriculture Development Policy and Planning Section in the Joint ECA/FAO Agriculture Division.

	Average Annual Growth Rate (Exponential)			
	1961-1970	1971-1980	1981-1990	1991-1992
Total agricultural production	2.9	1.3	2.8	-2.4
Per caput agricultural production	0.2	-1.5	-0.2	-5.2
Total food production	2.8	1.5	2.9	-2.5
Per caput food production	0.2	-1.3	-0.1	-5.3

Source: FAO Agrostat data 1993, Statistics Division, Rome, Italy

working population is engaged.^{1/} Agricultural production which during 1961-1970 increased at an annual average growth rate of 2.9 per cent dropped to a negative growth of -2.4 per cent in 1991/1992. In the face of population growth rate of over 3 per cent a year, per capita food production was a negative growth of -5.3 per cent per annum during the same period down from -0.1 per cent during 1981-90 period. Africa, which during 1960-1970 period, was a small net exporter of food, having achieved a food

Ethiopia during the period 1988/90. See also Annex Table3.

In the early 1970s, the number of hungry and malnourished people in Africa was about 80 million. The current corresponding figure is believed to be in the range of 175-200 million and it is likely to jump to 300 million by the year 2010 (FAO Agriculture: Towards 2010) if the present trends continue.^{3/} The daily per caput food consumption in Africa south of the Sahara has

Countries	K cal/cap
Kenya	2,060
Rwanda	1,830
Uganda	2,342
Botswana	2,201
Tanzania	2,200
Zambia	2,046
Zimbabwe	2,132

Source: FAO/Netherlands Conference on Agriculture and the Environment, Regional Document No. 1 (1991)

self-sufficiency ratio (SSR)^{2/} of 102, saw this ratio decline to 75 during the 1978-1982 period. Taking cereals production alone, the SSR for the countries of Eastern and Southern Africa ranges from 0 and 1.5 in Djibouti and Mauritius respectively to 30 and about 37 in Comoros and Botswana; and 54, 58, 66, 76 and 77 in Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Somalia and

never exceeded 2140 k cal/day since the 1960s. Now it is estimated to be 2100 -about 85 per cent of internationally recommended requirement for a healthy and active life. Hunger and malnutrition are reflections mainly of poverty. For instance, in the developing countries only 10-15 per cent of hunger stems from emergencies; most hunger - 85-90 per cent - is born of poverty.

About 47.6 per cent of people in Africa south of the Sahara were classified as being below the poverty line in 1985 and this figure is likely to shoot up to 49.7 per cent by the year 2000 (World Bank 1992). The number of poor in the region grew at roughly the same rate as the population, about 3 per cent per year during the 1980s. The minimum economic growth rate needed to reduce the number of poor is about 4.7 per cent. If African agriculture can achieve a 5 per cent annual growth rate, the sector will be instrumental in improving food security and reducing poverty.

While remarkable progress has been made in some developing countries in reducing chronic hunger and abject poverty, especially in East and South Asia, the situation has deteriorated in Africa.^{4/} Towards the end of the 1980s, 40 out of 68 low-income, food-deficit countries failed to provide enough food to meet average nutritional requirements. Twenty-nine of them were in Africa, their people perennially condemned to hunger by inadequate incomes. The plight of starving people in the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa is all too familiar, especially in Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Angola, Mozambique and Liberia. Inasmuch as food security is not just a supply issue, but also a function of income and purchasing power, the results of an assessment of the changes in per capita income during the same period were equally disquieting. According to the United Nations estimates, between 1981 and 1990, real GDP per person in Africa recorded a negative average annual growth of 1.3 per cent.

The figures in Annex Table 5 serve to provide a basic indicator of the direction of the trends in the incidence of abject poverty in Africa where in 1991 the number of people in this category increased to 140 million, as compared with 120 million in 1985. China, India and Indonesia among others in that region, realized spectacular increases in per capita food production during the 1980s. By the end of the decade, daily per capita food supply for the region as a whole reached 2433 kcal, as compared to 2250 kilo calories ten years earlier.

For Africa, and of all the regions, the nexus between sustainability and food security has proved to be much more complex, in particular African commodities and pro-

duction systems which are extremely complex, and contrasts with the original green revolution's concentration on wheat and rice in the 1960s and early 1970s. The region has made little progress in increasing per caput food supplies over the last three decades. At the same time, dependence on outside supplies has grown alarmingly, not only to meet emergency needs but also to cover the growing structural deficit. This situation is clearly unsustainable. A drastic turn-around in the performance of the sector is crucial and this is not likely to come about at present levels of technology and management.^{5/} Yet, the tendency to import technology developed outside the region under different climatic and soil conditions has not always proven to be a successful and sustainable approach. Hence, the notion of technology transfer is a difficult subject and may be unsustainable for two reasons. Firstly, because it is likely to have been conceived under different agro-industrial, social, political and economic conditions in the industrial countries (capital-intensive and energy-intensive); and secondly, no company will give you technological know-how unless it is for its benefit. Thus, technologies developed under local conditions are needed, as are improved traditional and simple techniques and farm implements, while trying to forge new partnerships with relevant and qualified firms and research institutes in other regions. Low productivity lies at the heart of Africa's economic problem. For instance, Africa's rate of return on investment is estimated to be only one-tenth that of South Asia.

If we understand development to mean a socio-economic undertaking or process that leads to a higher quality of life or a cumulative increase in levels of consumption, Africa has not had any of these. Development should result in an increase in the standard of living, a richer cultural life, better health, social justice, peace and understanding among peoples, to contribute to a higher quality of life. Two of the major obstacles to rapid and sustained growth in the region are the economic structures inherited from the past and the institutional factors associated with them. Thus, in addition to the increasing poverty, Africa's economic crisis has also been characterized by the disintegration of the productive and infrastructural facilities. Apart from the decline of food and agriculture, most African industries have

Table 3. GDP Per Capita for Selected Countries of Eastern and Southern African Subregion, 1985-1992
(In Current and Constant 1980 Prices)

Country		1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Angola	Current	636	562	693	710	769	777	809	811
	Constant	454	497	545	599	590	591	601	601
	Growth (%)	0.95	9.44	9.63	9.86	-1.46	0.19	1.61	0.06
Botswana	Current	927	940	1112	1211	2163	2290	2567	3005
	Constant	1497	1551	1602	1747	1908	1933	2021	2031
	Growth (%)	2.93	3.58	3.35	9	9.25	1.31	4.53	0.52
Kenya	Current	341	383	394	381	363	376	330	322
	Constant	355	361	366	371	376	379	373	362
	Growth (%)	2.23	1.86	1.24	1.53	1.33	0.6	-1.4	-3.17
Lesotho	Current	163	176	227	271	288	314	334	397
	Constant	258	256	261	287	312	318	311	307
	Growth (%)	0.67	-0.92	2.19	9.71	8.67	1.95	-1.98	-1.32
Malawi	Current	155	170	150	162	188	191	241	205
	Constant	180	175	173	173	173	175	182	169
	Growth (%)	-1.34	-2.36	-1.3	-0.27	0.48	1.11	3.95	-7.27
Mozambique	Current	109	105	195	248	332	384	524	634
	Constant	89	88	90	93	95	95	95	91
	Growth (%)	-11.01	-1.29	2.95	2.92	2.7	-0.81	0.36	-4.03
Namibia	Current	838	935	847	1164	1106	1170	1242	1320
	Constant	1268	1264	1282	1312	1255	1282	1304	1260
	Growth (%)	2.25	-0.32	1.43	2.36	-4.38	2.21	1.71	-3.36
Swaziland	Current	498	530	617	638	791	817	901	1080
	Constant	1005	1008	1057	979	1007	1046	1034	1025
	Growth (%)	2.87	0.29	4.87	-7.34	2.87	3.81	-1.14	-0.84
Tanzania	Current	228	224	217	195	108	93	105	100
	Constant	166	165	168	168	168	167	168	168
	Growth (%)	-1.17	-0.48	1.57	0.48	-0.41	-0.36	0.28	0.34
Uganda	Current	276	265	301	306	209	220	156	239
	Constant	203	217	223	231	239	240	239	238
	Growth (%)	2.45	6.96	2.71	3.72	3.44	0.66	-0.44	-0.59
Zambia	Current	377	280	260	300	385	631	457	665
	Constant	595	578	569	582	556	538	504	463
	Growth (%)	2.45	-2.99	-1.56	2.42	-4.61	-3.21	-6.24	-8.08
Zimbabwe	Current	550	606	610	697	679	752	631	825
	Constant	807	803	770	815	833	827	830	706
	Growth (%)	3.9	-0.51	-4.11	5.85	2.25	-0.79	0.4	-14.92

Source: ECA Statistics Division, April 1994.

also been increasingly operating much below their installed capacities. The physical infrastructure built during the immediate post-independence era, has, to a very large extent, deteriorated due to poor maintenance and lack of renovation; while social services and welfare, especially education, public health and sanitation, housing, etc. have rapidly deteriorated and continue to decay.

II. TRENDS IN ECONOMIC POLICY ADOPTIONS

Against the above background, many African countries and their people have not been idle in the face

"Heaven never helps the man who will never act."

Sophocles

of these adverse conditions, especially with regard to food security. During the past few years, there has been growing awareness among these countries that a major imperative for agricultural and rural development is the need for appropriate national and international policies that will foster economic growth. *Per contra*, inappropriate national and international policies have been at the root of the failure of many countries to make progress. Policies followed over the last decades have not brought about the full benefits expected at independence. The region is still economically and technologically dependent. This better understanding of what was wrong with past policies has led many African governments to adopt major action-oriented socio-economic development strategies, introducing economic policy reforms and measures to remedy the situation. The most recent of such programmes are the OAU's Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) (1980); FAO-initiated Regional Food Plan for Africa (1978); the Harare Declaration of African Ministers of Agriculture; FAO's African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years (1986); Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990 (APPER) in 1985; the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (UN-PAAERD) in 1986; and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) of 1991. In addition, since 1980, at the height of adverse economic circumstances, an increasing number of African countries have adopted stabilization and

structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), usually with the support of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

These adjustment policies which originated from industrialized countries have now become common and are firmly in place in Africa. But they constitute a sharp break with earlier nation-directed policies, and they do not provide an overall development strategy as required, instead they changed African mainstream development priorities such as those in LPA and UN-PAAERD. Thus, Africa has no shortage of development strategies, nor has the opportunity been rare but the ability to recognize it. UN-PAAERD was a novel compact between Africa and the international community, embodying mutually reinforcing commitments. The unanimous adoption of UN-PAAERD by the United Nations General Assembly, hope was held that this compact would usher in a new era of international cooperation between the two parties. At the end of five years of the Programme, however, Africa's socio-economic conditions still remained precarious and the results of the programme fell far below expectations. But on the whole, Africa, on her part, undertook commendable efforts to implement policy reforms and structural adjustment programmes. On the other hand, a careful evaluation of the response of the international community to UN-PAAERD, regrettably, leads to the conclusion that it did not fully carry out its part of the compact. The additional resource flows (US\$ 9.1 billion p.a. over UN-PAAERD period) were not forthcoming, instead, it is estimated that total net resource flows to Africa actually declined sharply in real terms.

As far as SAPs are concerned, the overall assessment has led to the conclusion that, although these programmes aim at restoring growth, these objectives cannot be achieved without addressing the fundamental structural bottlenecks of African economies. Average living standards in many of our countries are now below what they were at independence and most of the improvements in the physical quality of life achieved during the 1960s and 1970s have been severely eroded and by the 1980s, the record was almost everywhere one of abysmal failure, decapitalization, deindustrialization and de-development in general.

It appears that these countries often (unwillingly) embarked upon the orthodox adjustment programmes/policies without an adequately developed institutional framework for agricultural policy formulation in particular, and economic policy formulation in general with serious negative impact on a number of sectors. From the economic point of view, SAPs by their very design, assume that the classical instruments of control of money supply, credit squeeze, exchange rate and interest rate adjustments, trade liberalization etc. which may be valid with well-structured economies, could bring about positive results in African economies characterized by weak and disarticulated structures. As evidence would now show, in many cases sustained economic growth has not materialized, the rate of savings, and therefore investment, rather than improve has tended to decrease, budget and balance of payments deficits have tended to widen and debt service obligations have become unbearable. The social impact has even raised more doubts and questions not only at policy making levels within and outside Africa, but also in different international fora.^{6/}

Consequently, at the beginning of 1988, UNECA embarked on a search for an African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP) that would address simultaneously both adjustment and structural transformation problems of the African economies. The African countries were called upon to increase their efforts in the search for a viable conceptual and practical framework for economic structural adjustment programmes. Africa needs fundamental change and transformation, the only question is what type of adjustment that will bring about the Africa of our vision. AAF-SAP argued that these programmes had to be in keeping with the long-term development objectives and strategies of Africa.

Important changes in economic policy formulation emerged as a consequence of the difficulties of the economic development and imbalances (high inflation rates and unemployment, balance of payments bottleneck and budgetary deficits) of many African nations during the 1980s which left majority of governments with little choice

but to adopt structural adjustment programmes accompanied by economic and financial stabilization measures. These immediate financial constraints have in practice led to the neglect of urgent long-term development needs.^{7/} In previous decades, Government interventions in the process of economic development were conducted mainly through medium-term national plans - typically of five years which centred on public sector investment allocation. The document has also often been prepared in order to mobilize external resources with little or no linkage with the needs and concerns of the national community. Correspondingly, the training requirements for civil servants were largely on sectoral planning and project analysis.

The current thinking is unanimous on the need to link short and medium-term stabilization programmes with longer-term strategies. Efforts presently underway will therefore need to be stepped up in order to renew and reactivate the planning process to ensure the transition from the short to the long term. In this regard, it is worth noting that since the early 1980s, the complex impact of policy instruments such as devaluation, taxation, pricing and subsidies have received greater attention. While, on one hand, wide range of enabling policy reforms has been made, on the other hand, the institutional basis of policy formulation including manpower, has tended to lag behind.

Agriculture occupies a major place within the economies of African countries. For most it provides livelihood to two-thirds or more of the population, constitutes the largest source of exports, and determines the pace of economic growth. The success of adjustment policies is accordingly measurable by its success in improving the agricultural sector. The efficacy of devaluation - a key instrument of macro-price policy - is dependent on performance of exports, which are often agricultural. Fiscal and trade policies impinge significantly on prices of agricultural outputs and inputs. Institutional reforms, another important aspect of adjustment policies, are frequently concerned with agricultural parastatals. Hence, even in its general approach, adjustment policies have much to do with agriculture. Furthermore, the adjustment policies adopted in African countries include agri-

cultural sector-specific policies. These cover a wide range of policy instruments pertaining to credit, food security, producer and consumer prices, marketing, processing, subsidies of inputs, taxes and others.

Thus, there is need to improve the capacity at the country level for policy analysis to enable developing countries better discern the effects and impact of policy measures that they are adopting, to identify and design on the basis of a clearer awareness of such effects and impact the nature and timing of policy reforms, and implement effectively policy measures. Of course, the need for improving such capacity, which should be given focus by appropriate adjustment policies is, nevertheless a continuing one, as policy analysis, formulation and implementation are permanent functions of any government under any circumstance.

In countries where the agriculture sector predominates, appropriate policies, effective institutions and investment in the sector are almost equivalent to effective economic development policies. Agricultural policies have a great influence and they can make a big difference in performance.

For example, countries with similar agro-climatic and historical conditions and growth potentials can exhibit dramatic differences in performance depending on policies being pursued, or the lack of policy. Food production growth rates were better in Cameroon, Ghana and Liberia than in neighbouring Central African Republic, Guinea and Congo during 1980-85 period. Similarly, the performance was better in Tanzania and Kenya than in Ethiopia and Mozambique. Total food production increased much faster in Libya, Egypt and Tunisia as compared to the other North African countries during the same period.

Generally, agricultural success stories are characterized by policies relating to the application of science to boost yields; investment in the factors that step up local production and consumption; and the shredding of policies that hurt farmers. African farmers must be given all the incentives required for increased food supply including improved general terms of trade for agriculture. Agriculture and rural development are at the centre of poverty allevia-

tion. Most of the poor people depend on farm incomes, while a large percentage of poor people's income is spent on food. And yet, in general, rural productivity (and income per capita) are estimated at only 30-40 per cent of urban levels.

With the drive to democracy in Africa, new expectations are created and Africa is once again on a new learning curve. However, democracy will not be sustained without sustainable economic growth and a more equitable and employment creating development path. Hence, despite the sombre recording of the economic deterioration in Africa, most African countries are engaged in difficult and often politically risky policy reform programmes. Despite the difficulties involved, a majority of them have adopted policy reforms designed to improve overall economic management and performance, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector, to give greater priority to channelling resources to the agricultural sector on which the majority of Africa's people depend for their livelihood.

In this regard, we must draw on the lessons of this very moderate success, which is the best that can be said of the reform programmes currently in place in Africa. It must be recognized that they have not achieved their objectives. So, more must be done. But some recent developments in agricultural policy and planning strategies in a few countries tend to reflect some of the issues addressed in the above-mentioned programmes and plans and are courageous and commendable. For instance, in Mauritius, there are apparent moves to phase out sugar export taxes with a view to encourage expanded investment in sugar production. In Seychelles, a package of policy incentive has been put in place with the medium-term objective of privatizing the agricultural sector.

However, efforts by the African countries to pursue and deepen the reform process cannot be sustained indefinitely in the face of an adverse external environment. No wonder, therefore, that inspite of all the measures taken, the overall performance of the economies of African countries remains unsatisfactory. The combined adverse effects of domestic structural impediments and tightened external resource constraints

have outweighed the positive influence of policy reforms. In many countries cuts in government expenditures and public wages freezes and lay-offs have resulted in severe personal hardship for those affected. And both the quality and the quantity of health and education services have been declining too.

III. AFRICAN POLICY AGENDA AND POLICY RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

"Your advice is important because you are involved in different ways in practical development work. There is not much dispute on what needs to be done; endless seminars have been organized, and endless papers written. I look to you for practical advice on how development in Africa can be better coordinated and focused. What Africa needs is practical solutions."

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on African Development to Panel of High-level Personalities, Geneva, 28 December 1992, UN-NADAF.

African countries need to develop their own policy agenda more effectively than has been the case in the past. In spite of efforts by African institutions such as the OAU and UNECA to coordinate African positions in global development issues, it is foreign experts who occupy the centre-stage of policy making in many African countries. African governments have largely failed to act on Africa-initiated programmes and plans mentioned in Section II above, documents which have clearly identified many of Africa's strategies for change. They have failed to act on the decisions reached at different levels of their own continental meetings, including Summit Conferences. The practice of policy reform in developing countries rarely conforms to neat academic theories. Political considerations and effective leadership are often as important for success as are the right policy objectives and the sequence of reform. And yet only a few governments engage in public debate about development priorities with their own citizens, involving them in strategy-policy-praxis design and articulation.

Discussions aimed at defining alternative development for Africa's future and reverse the economic slide, must give emphasis and special priority to the articulation of an African rather than a First World perspective on the cause of events in Africa. For the most part, African countries have been on the receiving end of fads, i.e. currently in favour but nonetheless transient ideas in development strategies especially concerning agricultural action programmes. The purveyors of these fashionable and quaint ideas, fundamentally inimical to progress, are for the most part donor agencies. This is not surprising since the internal professional and intellectual community in Africa has been ineffective in defining problems and in offering viable domestic policy options, quite apart from the fact that many governments are themselves part of the problem.

The unsatisfactory macro-economic performance of the African economies reflects both internal and external constraints and to structural rigidities. With regard to external constraints, a case exists for a major restructuring of development cooperation policies of the past, viz. the development policies of the 1950s (technical assistance); 1960s (trade, not aid); 1970s (NIEO^{8/} plus basic human needs); and the 1980s with adjustments which have obviously been inadequate.

Agriculture is without doubt one of the most important stabilizing factors in the continent. It is therefore the logical starting point of any strategy of getting the region out of the doldrums in which it finds itself. It is up to the leaders of Africa and the international agencies involved in African development to ensure that this challenge is accepted. The alternative is hunger, famine and destitution.

The primary role of the agricultural sector is to supply food, fibre and beverages to the population, and to generate employment, income and foreign exchange. This simple fact elevates agriculture to a position of importance in any community. Taking into account Africa's ever growing needs of our people, sustained agricultural development in our continent is undoubtedly an essential prerequisite for an acceptable economic, political and social order, as well as for the stability of society in general.

- General Development Policies and Agricultural Development

Macro-economic policies have an important influence on the development of the food and agricultural sector and food security, both in the short and longer term, through their effects on prices, incomes and employment. These non-agricultural and economy-wide policies such as industrial protection and fiscal policies are highly crucial to food security; but so are food and agriculture-related policies because of how they affect the speed of urbanization (through rural out-migration) and the provision of food itself. The direct and indirect protection and taxation of economic sectors determine their relative competitiveness, which, in turn, determines resource flows in the economy. The choice of development strategy is highly relevant for the long-run effects of macro-economic policies on economic growth and alleviation of poverty (Mellor 1986).

Agriculture has usually been on the losing end in many developing countries owing to a focus on industrialization that was largely financed out of agricultural taxation. The effect of such an industrialization policy on urbanization was to encourage excessive and untimely outflows of people from agricultural areas to urban areas. Yet, agriculture can function as a vehicle of growth if labour productivity and employment in agriculture are enhanced through new technologies and diversification. If this is done, it can be expected that one significant spur to urbanization that aggravates poverty - namely, rural migration - will be reduced and food security will be increased. The deleterious ways in which the structural maladjustments of the 1980s and early 1990s which had severe effects on the lives of people in the developing countries, have emphasized the importance of macro-economic policies in ensuring food security.

The macro-economic policies should therefore be designed to strengthen rather than counteract the incentives for agricultural development provided by means of sectoral policies. In this regard, structural adjustment policies for correcting macro-economic disequilibria would need to put greater emphasis on growth-generating aspects by removing constraints and bottle-

necks to growth. The design, the sequencing and the implementation of such policies should take into account social costs, in particular adverse effects on nutrition, health and education. These costs must be minimized in order to safeguard the human resources potential on which development depends.

The role of the public sector in economic life also need to be viewed from a pragmatic standpoint, giving serious consideration to widely differing national circumstances, experiences and capabilities. African governments, often prompted by donor agencies, have been too inclined uncritically to adopt uniform policy solutions, however unwieldy and inappropriate, recommending technologies and approaches that overlook the diversity of different situations. The alternative to central planning is not the total abandonment of government's potential facilitative or development-generating roles in such areas as technical, human and institutional infrastructure conducive to a thriving agriculture and its sustainability. There is room for policy both of *laissez-aller* and *laissez-faire* in the handling of public affairs. The issue will be to link all these operationally, including the reality that government itself will ultimately determine the role of government in agricultural development.^{9/}

Meeting food production demand in years to come suggests the importance of appropriate policies and approaches. The broad field of knowledge to support increases in rural output, and the social and economic advance of rural people should encompass the following essential sets of activities: people-centred policy and planning; environment and renewable natural resources; genetic resources; production and production systems; protection against pests and diseases; external inputs; and the management and monitoring of performance, among others.

For many countries, the expansion of the cultivated area - historically the major source of increased production - is no longer either an advisable or plausible solution, in particular if we consider the environmental trade-offs associated with such expansion. Biotechnology offers some hope. Speeding the plant-breeding process could result in crop varieties that resist disease or insects more effectively, and

adapt better to arid areas, than current varieties. It is worth noting, however, that these biotechnology-generated gains are unlikely to be distributed uniformly within the sector. The poorest individuals inhabiting agriculturally marginal areas stand least likely to benefit. IFPRI research suggests that increasing the productivity of land already under cultivation, even in highly productive areas, through better agricultural policies, offers the best hope for meeting future food demands (IFPRI report, July 1991).

Research in Brazil, for example, has found vast differences in productivity for virtually all crops, suggesting latitude for productivity gains with existing technologies. Traditionally, much of this variation in productivity has been attributed to the differences in ecological conditions faced by farmers. But do ecological differences account for most of the variation in productivity? To find out, IFPRI researchers, in collaboration with Brazilian researchers devised and implemented a method for categorizing Brazilian farmland that allows researchers and policy makers to control for differences in soil type, climate, climate variability, and rainfall - the key determinants of agricultural production. By identifying relatively homogeneous land groups, it was possible to look across these groups to assess the influences of different ecological conditions on agricultural productivity, and within homogeneous land groups to highlight the non-ecological factors affecting yields. As expected, differences in productivity *across* ecological zones were substantial. Areas with better soils, more temperate climates, and more regular rainfall dramatically outproduced areas with poorer soils, warmer climates, and less than appropriate rainfall patterns, by as much as 300 per cent.

However, this research also identified large differences in agricultural productivity *within* these relatively homogeneous ecological zones; differences so vast that they could only partly be explained by remaining differences in the underlying natural resource base. For example, corn production in 1980 within the north-east ecological zone - one of the poorest areas in Brazil - varied from a high of 1.4 metric tons per hectare to a low of 0.1 metric ton per hectare. Variations of this size in a fairly

homogeneous agro-ecological region are not due to improper classification of ecological characteristics, especially since other agro-ecological zones showed similarly large yield variations. Rather, these vast differences in productivity within common ecological regions are primarily due to very different production techniques being used by farmers to produce the same products. This suggests that if the same ecological conditions support both sophisticated and rudimentary technologies, there is room for increasing productivity within agro-ecological zones by spreading the use of existing modern technology.

But what factors influence farmers in deciding which type of production technology to adopt? Research suggests that agricultural policies, including policies associated with infrastructure, agriculture extension, availability and cost of agricultural credit, and the like, greatly influence farmers' decisions as to choice of techniques. In the Brazilian case, changes in the policy environment in the areas studied could dramatically broaden the diffusion of more sophisticated production technology to substantially increase output per hectare of virtually all agricultural production. The implications for Africa are clearly obvious. The fundamental supply problem in Africa is to match a set of potential technologies with appropriate policies. There are considerable gaps in the knowledge needed to choose and effectively implement policies to ensure sustainable agricultural development. Research will be required on how policies can be adapted for local implementation, in particular problems with policy implementation in Africa; criteria for choosing among policies; and the synergistic effects of different parts forming the programme.

- Food Policy

Food policy is of crucial importance in the process of social and economic development. In confronting their food and agricultural problems, therefore, African governments will need perceptive, in-depth analysis and well-trained local analysts to do so. Supporting the African development of such analytical processes is essential if we are serious about improving food and agricultural policy because sound develop-

ment policy analysis plays an important role in food policy design.

Food policy embraces a large number of separate aspects, but together they cover some of the most important and sensitive issues which concern agricultural development in African countries. These issues can be grouped under these main headings: food consumption trends; nutrition policy; reduction of food losses; and food security systems. All these four areas are particularly amenable to policies that induce technical change.

Food consumption patterns, reflecting in particular preferences for wheat and rice over traditional cereals such as millet and sorghum, have been changing in many countries. The new pattern of demand is particularly associated with higher income urban groups. It is only partially met at present by internal production forcing many nations to increase food imports, thus increasing the demand for foreign exchange. Even where domestic production of the preferred food is feasible, the farming techniques adopted (typically involving large mechanized farms) cause a significant increase in the use of the scarce factors-capital, foreign exchange and high-level management. Urban bias in some countries, by raising urban incomes and encouraging rural-urban migration, makes the situation worse. So too does an over-valued exchange rate, since the imported foods become underpriced relative to domestically produced ones.

Corrective policy measures to mitigate such trends include restrictions on imported food through import duties, quotas and foreign exchange rationing, encouraging the domestic substitution of imported foodstuffs (especially those using land and labour-intensive production methods), requiring a proportion of local cereal flour to be incorporated in cereal products and, above all, bringing the exchange rate to a realistic level.

With regard to nutrition policy, very few countries in the region have clearly defined policies for nutrition. The main causes of endemic malnutrition, which especially affects infants and children, are poverty resulting from inadequate production and resultant low-incomes relative to the cost

of food. Also, in areas where bulky staples are consumed, such as bananas or cassava, there is often a lack of understanding of infants' dietary requirements.

Experience with clinical treatment of malnourished infants has shown it to be both expensive and ineffective, particularly when medical problems intervene as they surely do. Nutritional policy must be built into the general development programmes aiming at raising the incomes of the poorest groups. In addition, nutritional training in the education of both girls and boys particularly in the first three years of primary school when attendance is highest and those particularly in need can be reached is a worthwhile approach.

As far as food losses and related problems are concerned, improved handling including storage methods would greatly contribute to reduction of post-harvest losses. Traditional storage losses vary especially with the climate and crop type. They can be as low as 3-4 per cent in respect of millet and sorghum in dry-savannah climates. The worst problems and biggest gains from improved practices are in bulk storage in the modern sector, because of poor infestation control and stock management; scarcity of imported chemicals and bags due to foreign exchange difficulties; and inappropriate technology.

The fourth area under food policy deals with food security systems. Food security implies universal access to and availability of staple food supplies. Access to food is dependent in part on growth in real income and reduction of poverty. The cheapest source of food is normally from a country's own agricultural sector, unless the exchange rate is overvalued or the opportunity costs of alternative uses of agricultural resources exceeds the value of food production. This is unlikely to arise in land surplus countries, but in certain countries, such as Kenya and the island economies of the Comoros, the Seychelles and Mauritius, increasingly difficult policy choices will have to be made within the agricultural sector, especially between food and cash crops, and between agriculture and other forms of land use.

Although policy objectives do vary from country to country, some countries of the

Eastern and Southern African subregion have clearly defined food reserve policies. The policies of these countries (Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) cover handling emergencies; stabilizing prices; supplying domestic and export markets; organizing distribution; meeting international commitments such as long-term contracts; and strategic considerations. Food reserves in most countries of the subregion, however, remain at levels that leave little or no margin for food security.

It is important to make a clear distinction between long-term and short-term elements of food policy and food security relationships. Short-term elements involve mainly food supply instability and insecurity - largely concerning food imports for the urban population.¹⁰⁷ The food problem is, in reality, basically an urban problem.

A rational long-term food policy should include these basic goals: a long-term dynamic growth in the food and agricultural sectors (i.e. an increase in rural output and incomes); an improved income distribution, primarily through job creation; a decent minimum standard of living and good nutrition; and security against famine, extreme food shortages and uncertain world food supplies and prices.

Food development policy analysis will of course, be powerfully influenced by political, social and other considerations as well as the capacity to implement the results of the analysis. The food and nutrition problems are also inter-disciplinary and multi-sectoral in nature. A guiding principle for choosing policies must be their cost-effectiveness, given constraints on fiscal and foreign-exchange resources experienced by many African countries. For example, one central policy dilemma has to do with food price subsidies widespread in both developing and developed countries. At the centre of the dilemma are the demands for protection by rural producers and the demands for subsidies by urban consumers. These subsidies, especially in developing countries have long tended to benefit the urban populations. Urban biases are glaring when you look at Africa's food price controls and the policies of food marketing parastatals. In 1980, for instance, the marketing subsidy for maize meal was about 10 per cent of

the Zambian government's recurrent expenditure, while in 1988 this subsidy was 65 per cent of the total expenditure on maize (Pearce, 1991). These income transfers from food subsidies tend to raise the real income of low-income households. Subsidies can therefore be a substantial policy instrument for improving food security for this group whose income and price elasticities for staple foodstuffs are high.

The role of the food policy analyst (or policy adviser) is, therefore, to help identify those policies whose use will minimize the conflicts between direct goals; and to indicate the likely consequences of a given choice of instruments. An important challenge to agricultural-sector analysts is how to integrate knowledge of farm systems into the formation and analysis of food and agricultural policy: the living systems (agricultural systems) are not only extremely but also poorly understood. A considerable fund of understanding of the different production systems, conditions and motivations of people is therefore needed. Hence, the urgent need for capacity development.

- Capacity Building and Economic Management

A major missing ingredient that has been responsible for Africa's poor economic performance is the lack of adequate indigenous capacity in several critical areas of human, institutional and infrastructural development. Capacity building is an enormous and complex undertaking, which will need to be sustained over several decades and with significant financial outlay. Capacity building is probably the only solid platform from which Africa can be launched on to the path of sustained recovery, accelerated growth, environmentally sustainable development, equitable distribution of socio-economic opportunities and steady reduction of poverty. Development is not solely a matter of economics, pulling a few economic levers here and there. Pointed attention must also be paid to institution building, popular participation and an end to circumscribed freedoms. We have now come to appreciate that participation by citizens in all of the institutions of a society - political as well as economic - is a prerequisite for development.

The creation of adequate skills is necessary for successful development. Many domestic constraints are linked to weaknesses in education, training and management systems. Further, the ability of African countries to fund human resource development adequately is limited by the current economic crisis and the impact of adjustment programmes. Although in some cases school enrolments have risen, the quality of education has not kept pace with the demands of the labour market, particularly in mathematics and science. Institutional decay is symbolized by the poor conditions of once world-class universities in Africa. Yet, the development of the region's human resources for technology, economic management, and policy analysis and implementation must be made a major object of both national policy and of external financial support. Human resources are not Africa's only potential. The continent has some of the most productive land and mineral resources in the world, not to mention oceans, lakes and rivers.¹¹ But Africa's full potential can only be realized once the economies have recovered and structural transformations have been achieved.

Policy analysis must evaluate the capacity to implement and manage the policy on a regular basis. Limited capacity to carry out this analysis is a major constraint in all countries, largely as a result of ineffective administration of development, i.e. capacity to analyze and implement. When confronted with the problems of poverty and hunger, therefore, food development policy analysis must concern itself not only with agricultural production and rural development, food consumption patterns and nutrition, but also the national capacity for macro policy planning and implementation. Macro-economic forces outside the agricultural sector are too pervasive and too powerful, hence, when they work at cross purposes to micro sectoral strategies, they create an unfavourable macro-economic environment and can, therefore, erode even the best laid down plans. Likewise, policy actions in other sectors of the economy that have greater impact on the agricultural sector than policy intervention in agriculture must also be addressed.

One such area is the importance of the availability of technology. It is accepted

throughout the world that a thriving agricultural sector can be maintained only if technology keeps track on a continuous basis. The greatest factor behind Africa's tale of death, starvation and malnutrition is the region's "under developed" agriculture. Technological change means not just higher agricultural productivity; it will impact the entire system of technical, socio-economic, institutional and political arrangements. There is, therefore, little question that policies for increasing economic growth, especially increased agricultural productivity, must provide the bedrock for future development. Increased yields will call for an urgent need for higher investment in agricultural research and technology to ensure enhancement and stabilization of yields. Increased yields will also mean rational utilization of natural resources a *sine qua non* for sustainability in food production. Investment aimed at improving the capabilities of the poor, by putting most of Africa's eggs in the basket of small-holders will lead to the achievement of short-term goals in tandem with long-term development. This is what has happened to such countries as different as China and Indonesia, Malaysia, India and Thailand.

The inadequacy of current food supplies is a testimony to past investments in agricultural research. This trend is unfortunate on several counts, including the fact that high rates of return have been documented for investments in agricultural research during the 1980s and early 1990s, including Africa. Secondly, there is a real time lag between agricultural research and increased production. The sustained growth of food and agricultural production is a long and exacting task to which everyone should contribute. For these reasons, Africa should never be hesitant to invest in the development and transfer of agricultural technology. Studies in the USA have shown that the return on investment in agricultural research varied between 35 per cent and 230 per cent. In South Africa, the benefit/cost ratios have been shown to be around 20 and 270.

The relevant technology for African agriculture will be the one that makes optimum use of available domestic resources. Agricultural policies and programmes should place emphasis on smallholder agriculture which holds the key to the transformation

of the more abundant resources of labour and land while economizing on the more scarce factors such as capital and foreign exchange earnings. The technologies in developed countries tend not only to be urban-biased but also large-scale, capital-intensive and import-dependent. The tendency to import technology developed outside the region under different climatic and soil conditions has, therefore, not always proven to be a successful and sustainable approach. Indeed, due to past policies, African countries have lagged so far behind in technology that today they are unable to choose what is best suited to their development needs. As a result, the continent is littered with inappropriate and confusing technologies.

In seeking to acquire technology through indigenous efforts (ability to assess, select, assimilate, use, adapt foreign technological knowledge and create this technology to suit local conditions), the central issue in an African strategy should be to strongly enhance the region's capacity to borrow, to build upon it, and thereafter to encourage the development of the required domestic capability in these areas. A Green Revolution for Africa would require greater efforts in terms of scientific manpower, institutions and financial resources considering the region's wide diversity in agro-ecological zones and the wide range of relatively unimproved staple food crops, each of which requires sustained research.

Human capacities (policy makers, researchers, extension agents and farmers) are also needed in the specific case of food security and self-sufficiency, institutional and infrastructural capacities. Capacity-building in terms of human resources involves education and training, managerial competence and participatory capabilities. Organizationally, institutional capacities required include sound decision-making, resource allocation and the management of socio-economic processes to be accompanied by a working physical infrastructure as well as strong non-farm sectors that support the development of agriculture.

- Other Sectors Supportive of Agriculture

While recognizing that a major breakthrough in African development can only be

brought about through structural transformation of the food and agriculture sector, it must, however, also be emphasized that the interaction between this sector and other supportive sectors in a mutually reinforcing manner, is a *sine qua non* for long-term and sustained overall growth and development. Accordingly, apart from agriculture, which has been accorded the highest priority, other priority areas envisioned by African leaders in the Lagos Plan of Action, APPER/UN-PAAERD and the Industrial Development decade for Africa (IDDA) include industry, energy, science and technology, natural resources, economic cooperation, transport and communications, human resources and entrepreneurship development, good government, and trade and finance, all of which support food and agricultural development. APPER/UN-PAAERD's analysis, in particular has developed a strategy which assigns complementary roles to these important and supporting sectors, including the role to be played by the large number of subsistence farmers on which the recovery efforts should concentrate.

The structural links between agriculture and these supporting sectors will be essential for increased agricultural productivity and efficiency. For instance, the development of tools/machinery, fertilizer, pesticides and vaccines will be necessary for rural development especially since the majority of African farm households depend on hand tools and animal-drawn equipment to produce their food. Any shortage of these inputs must therefore be avoided. The shortage condemns farms household to tedious and the least efficient working methods which tend to lock them into a treadmill of poverty and drudgery. Unfortunately, in the 1980s industry declined in many countries, mostly as a result of poor agricultural performance, excessive external dependence for inputs concurrently with plummeting foreign exchange earnings and rising debts. The African industrial enterprises are yet to be linked to domestic resources. There is also a serious lack of industrial skills. The mining sector has also resulted in massive distortions in incentives that have hindered the development of agriculture and industry. Between 1980 and 1986, growth in manufacturing virtually stagnated in Africa. Its share of GDP was about the same as it was in 1965 at 10 per

cent. In essence, therefore, there appears to have been a process of de-industrialization during most of the 1970s and 1980s. In the subregion, the most seriously affected countries were Madagascar, Mozambique and Tanzania.

Overall, Africa's industrialization strategy has been of little assistance to agricultural development. Notwithstanding the priority accorded to industrial development in the majority of African countries, the industrial plants are operating at about 20-40 per cent of their installed capacity. As a result, the industrial sector has not provided the expected inputs required to raise agricultural productivity nor has it generated surpluses for further investment or job creation. It has been of little use as a market for the agricultural sector. Instead, it continues to be a net user of both domestic and external resources.

The activities of the different Recovery Programmes currently underway in many countries are, therefore, aimed at addressing this problem. The objectives of these programmes include the rehabilitation and transformation of the industrial sector as well as the overhauling of the other sectors such as transport and communications, trade and finance, including resource flows, natural resources and energy development and utilization, human resources planning, and science and technology. In Kenya, for example, the stated strategy for industry is to support and promote rapid agricultural growth and a dynamic rural economy. Among the top priorities of the Ministry of Industry is to enhance the exploitation of local resources namely, cotton, sugar, hides and skins processing. In Mauritius, the industrial sector is led by Sugar Milling and the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) which concentrates on textile products. Tanzania's programmes in industrial, transport and communications, energy and construction sectors aim at assisting the activities in the food and agricultural sector. The country is also to improve the management and productivity of the industrial sector with a view to raising industrial production to 60-70 per cent of installed capacity.

There are also major policy shifts in most of the other countries, also aimed at paying greater attention in support of the produc-

tive sectors and those that are supportive of agriculture. In Zambia, for example, the main aim is to overcome the present transport and distribution problems through the development of road network. Efforts are also underway to restructure the manufacturing sector in order to increase its reliance on domestic raw materials.

With regard to energy supplies, this has been inadequate and unreliable and thereby contributing to slow economic growth while the increasing demand for household woodfuels has resulted in serious and chronic deforestation and degradation of the environment. About 80 per cent of Africa's population depends on woodfuels (fuelwood, charcoal, etc) for energy. Wood accounts for four-fifths of gross energy supply for most countries. Through price mechanism for woodfuels, Malawi is encouraging the conservation of the ecosystem and interfuel substitution, as well as improved coordination of energy sector development in order to meet future fuelwood demand. Similarly, Uganda intends to improve and develop new sources of woodfuels and to promote the development and use of renewable sources of energy.

One should underline the fact that most economic reform programmes continue to put emphasis on industrial growth and fail to take the issue of how industries will access technologies to achieve the needed growth. If structural transformation is to succeed, it ought to go beyond the mere exercise of reforming the economies to deal with the fundamentals of technological base. We are in a world where technology and manufacturing go hand-in-hand, except in Africa.

- International Agricultural Trade

There are important issues which must be tackled afresh if the economic development of Africa is to proceed. They are: external debt, trade including regional and subregional integration, and the diversification of African economies. External debt is a millstone around the neck of Africa and for most countries of the region and the situation is clearly unsustainable. The excessive burden of external debt has resulted in much of the export earnings continuing to be absorbed by the servicing of external debt. For many, the external

debt is higher than GDP.^{12/} This burden is a major obstacle to flow of private investment to Africa.

Africa relies principally on the export of its raw materials to further its development and to pay for its imports. The raw materials produced by the region's agricultural sector are mainly tropical commodities such as coffee, tea, cocoa, cotton and palm oil. However, demand for these goods in the developed countries is largely satisfied and shows no sign of increasing. Technology has also made it possible for less requirement of raw materials in these industrial countries, e.g. less cocoa used in chocolates. This has led to a continuous fall in their market prices, prices that neglect real costs and real returns. A simple comparison of two sets of figures provides an eloquent testimony. Thus, while the value of African agricultural exports increased slightly between 1980/83 and 1990/92, export volume has continued to fall since 1961 (Figures 1 and 2). Over the last decade, prices of agricultural, fishery and forestry products exported by developing countries have declined in real terms by 36 per cent. For example, compared with 1979-81, the purchasing capacity of coffee and cocoa exports has declined, a decade later by 45 per cent and that of natural rubber by 25 per cent.^{13/} In a country like Uganda whose economy is based primarily on agriculture, with coffee by far the largest export, small changes in the world price of coffee make large differences in the country's export earnings and in its economy. The price of Ugandan coffee has declined steadily in recent years, to \$ 0.82/kg in fiscal year 1992/93 from \$ 2.05/kg in 1987/88. Overall, Uganda's terms of trade have deteriorated by about 65 per cent over the last six years. As a result, its export earnings have been more than halved, dropping to \$ 157 million in 1992/93 from \$ 384 million in 1987/88.

In 1988, the whole of sub-Saharan Africa with more than 400 million inhabitants, had export revenues below those of Singapore, a country of 2.5 million. Despite the favourable provisions of the Lome Conventions, African countries have not achieved any major shifts to new exports with better growth prospects than traditional lines. This contrasts sharply with development in South Asia where primary products fell

from 63 per cent to 36 per cent of total exports from 1965 to 1987. In fact, dependence on primary commodity exports has been intensified. Between 1970 and 1989, the share of coffee in the total merchandise exports increased from 50.4 per cent to 97.9 per cent in Uganda, from 59.4 per cent to 69.5 per cent in Ethiopia and 54.4 per cent to 66.6 per cent in Rwanda. Over the same period, dependence on cotton export increased from 26.1 per cent to 86.7 per cent in Burkina Faso, from 13.5 per cent to 49.8 per cent in Mali and from 62.4 per cent to 66.9 per cent in Sudan. Tanzania's dependence on the export of coffee and cotton increased from 30.2 per cent in 1970 to 65.8 per cent in 1989. The dependence of Guinea on bauxite exports rose from 9.05 per cent in 1970 to 93.81 per cent in 1989 while the dependence of Togo on phosphate rose from 24.4 per cent to 62.1 per cent over the same period. It is only in a handful of countries that diversification to new lines of production has been attained. Between 1970 and 1985, only Chad and Mauritius managed to diversify into new export products. Furthermore, the high potential for increased export processing in African countries has not been effectively harnessed. For example, Zambia exports its copper in refined form, thereby adding values to the mined ore. But it does not convert refined copper into fabricated products (example, wires, tubes and pipes). Coffee from Tanzania is exported in green or roasted form but not as essences or extracts. In addition, African economies tend to have high wage rates while productivity remains at a low level. Compared to many Asian countries, where wage rates are lower and productivity is higher, African countries are at a disadvantage in exporting labour-intensive manufactured products. Rapid export expansion is also constrained by the increased production of substitutes. The current sluggish demand for cotton mirrors both the natural weakness of demand for textiles and the increasing challenge of synthetics. Copper is now coming under increasing threat from substitutes: aluminium for electric conductors, fibre optics for telecommunications systems, titanium for heat exchangers, and plastic and aluminium for car radiators and other components. (Abebe, 1994).

The farm sector is a very difficult one. A few years ago, American farmers committed suicide, bankers committed suicide, etc. because prices were very low. It is difficult to draw up your plans based on estimated improvement of international agricultural world market prices. UNCTAD introduced stability in the commodity prices, but the effort has been a complete failure. Nobody knows what to do; and there is no political authority to ensure control of supply and demand. Hence, the imbalance will remain.

Aid is obviously not a viable solution and, today, only serves as a derisory palliative. But even if sufficient aid were provided, should Africa be made permanently dependent on handouts? This should not be Africa's vocation, nor can it be the ambition of its governors or its people. In order to progress, Africa needs to be in a position to earn enough from its labour and its trade, and this calls for higher prices. In other words, their national policies need to be buttressed by favourable external economic conditions in today's interdependent world.

But since the imbalance is likely to continue, the question then becomes how does Africa live with this problem in such a way that Africa minimizes cost to its society? One way would be a strong programme of diversification (production and markets), including a balance between export and food crops. In addition, there is room for vertical integration in Africa. There is also limited room for preferential access to African partners' markets, while joint ventures may probably be the best way of cooperation. Africa's exports to the European Union are declining both in volume and value. Africa's salvation lies therefore in regional integration. Africa must define its needs, organize itself by asserting its identity, and managing its own affairs. We live in a time of free trade areas, common markets and an increasingly global economy. The future belongs to economic blocks. African countries will have to join forces if they are to compete effectively in world markets.

IV. PRINCIPAL CONSTRAINTS TO POLICY PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

When discussing long-term constraints to agricultural development, one should not forget that the African history has been a turbulent one where the African societies have had to weather many storms and cope with some of the most harsh situations, arising from external factors as well as internal strife and conflicts. Apart from slavery and forced migration, countries have suffered colonialism, and recently apartheid and the acts of destabilization in Southern Africa.

The inadequacies and the unsatisfactory nature of both economy-wide and agricultural structural domestic policies have also been a major factor constraining agricultural development. These policies have evolved in such a manner which discourage growth of agricultural output and incomes of the rural sector in general. An inefficient macro-economic framework has led to the exploitation and neglect of the agricultural sector and rural areas. The organizational, technical and economic inefficiency in the urban sectors and government, structurally continues to distort the development of this sector. The agrarian structure and land use policies have usually been inconsistent with the interests of the peasant farmer, who still dominates the agricultural scene in these countries. There is, therefore, hardly any country which has yet, in real terms, succeeded in removing the structures that impede the development of the traditional subsistence-oriented small farmer with his livestock and arable farming.

Quite often, the problem is not one of defining national food policy objectives but moving getting from planning to efficient implementation of these objectives. For policy-makers to influence the process of change, they must understand the environment and behaviour of food producers and consumers - how programmes and policies affect the food system (food production, consumption, marketing, food prices for farmers and consumers).^{14/} This will enhance the ability to identify the right policy instruments.

Although countries have come to the realization that sound policies and strate-

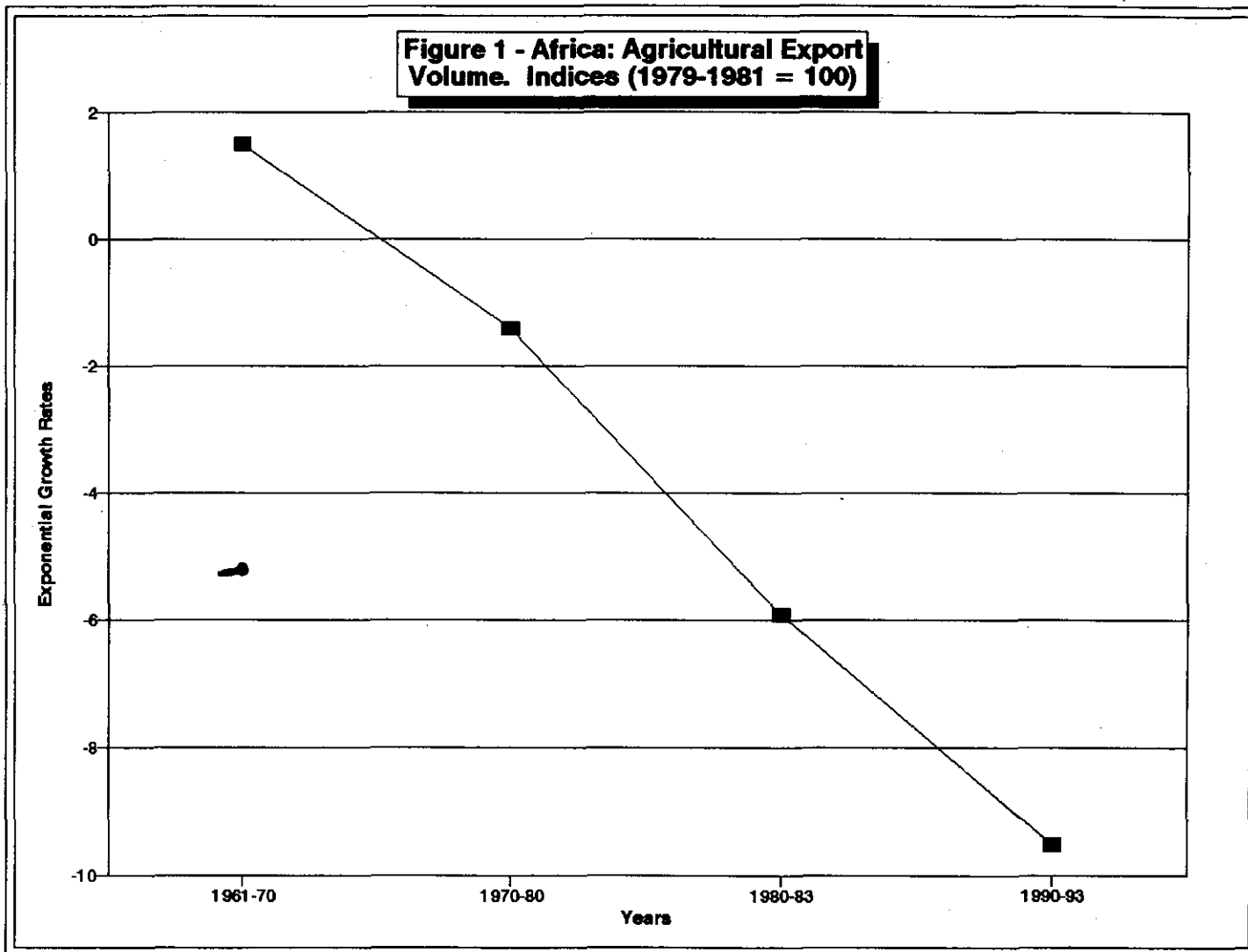
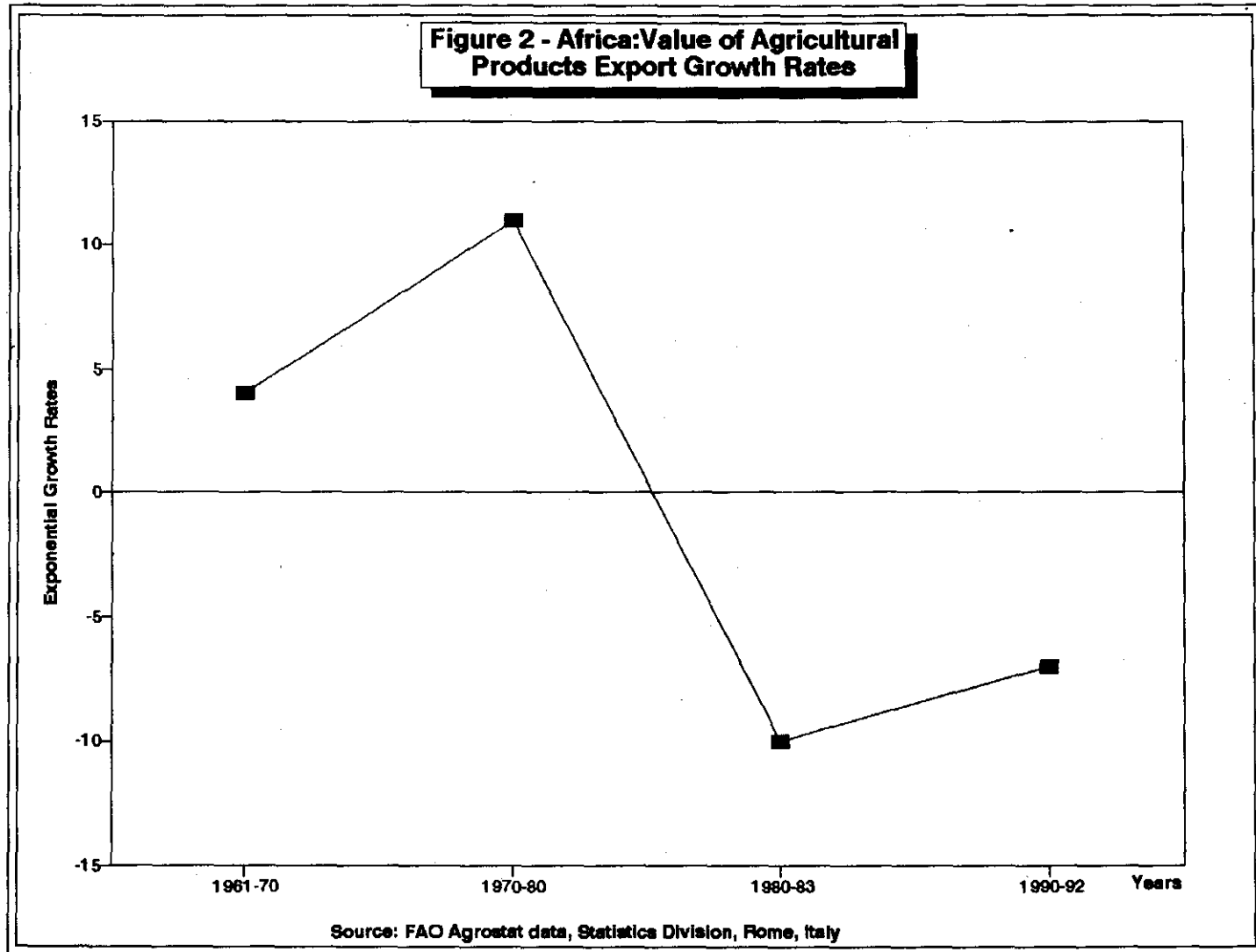


Figure 2 - Africa: Value of Agricultural Products Export Growth Rates



gies are essential for growth and development, this awareness has not been matched by the implementation rate of these strategies. The limited success in promulgating agricultural plans and policies points to the existence of basic impediments and constraints. As mentioned earlier, one of the underlying causes of food insecurity is the lack of integrated national food policies covering all the stages of the food system.

Another long-term problem is the widening supply gap (food production-population imbalance). This imbalance is increasing the pressure on food supplies and the agricultural natural resource base, which includes fisheries, forestry (and fuelwood), and grazing lands for both livestock and wildlife. Assuming a 2 per cent increase in per capita income and an income elasticity of demand for agricultural produce of 0.7 per cent, and given the current growth rate of population of about 3.2 per cent, efforts to close the gap must aim at not less than 4.6 per cent growth in agricultural production. This is the challenge. The sector is characterized by a circle of poverty which must be broken through substantially improved productivity. Thus as a consequence, the vast majority of the people are ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed and ill-educated. Professor Cairncross has therefore concluded that the LDCs are the slums of the world economy.^{15/} Because of poverty, many of our countries are involved in "misery-go-round". Blase says:

*"Low labour productivity results in low wages;
Because wages are low, incomes are low;
Because incomes are low, savings are low,
Because savings are low, investments are low;
Because investments are low, labour productivity is low - and a full circle has been completed."^{16/}*

Quite apart from the underdevelopment of basic resources of the subregion, (unused, underutilized or misused), including land, labour, water, etc., there is also the question of establishing an institutional framework which is truly development-oriented; institutions and infrastructures which encourage rather than discourage farmers to adopt and implement improved farming practices. For apart from the un-

derdeveloped agricultural sector, the existing secondary (goods industries) and tertiary (transport, commerce) sectors are also underdeveloped and therefore providing no redeeming features to agriculture.

The unsatisfactory macro-economic performance of the African economies reflects both internal and external constraints and to structural rigidities. Structural problems and the adverse impact of exogenous constraints to which African economies are highly sensitive continue to severely impede development efforts. The continuing high levels of protection of the agricultural sector in many developed countries is a major obstacle to progress. The high level of protection is illustrated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) recent estimate that total transfers from consumers and taxpayers associated with agricultural policies (subsidies) in the OECD countries reached a record level of \$ 320.7 billion in 1991, the highest since the OECD started keeping such accounts in 1987.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Too many indicators of social and economic progress in Africa tell a disappointing story. But economic failure is not a fatality in Africa. Africa's road to salvation does exist only it is narrow and hard. Socio-economic liberation will not come easily or without a determined start. Fortunately, Africa has natural resources and its people, the professionals who are ready to modernize the continent and the countless smallholders, foresters and fisherfolk who are the main protagonists of development. Governments must understand that agriculture is the only possible springboard for progress and act accordingly, which means implementing the options that give agricultural sector priority in policy and budgetary matters.

Based on our experiences, the first prerequisite for success is political commitment, including a continued commitment to democratizing Africa's political systems. The challenge facing Africa is exceptional. The cost of failure would be appalling. An immense effort will be needed to involve the whole population in this commitment: people's empowerment and the principle of accountability in all fields, especially those

that have engendered the African crisis.^{17/} The participation of the people in the recovery and development process should be broadened and made more effective, particularly through promoting increased access to development resources and benefits, creating favourable conditions for decentralized decision-making and encouraging greater entrepreneurship at all levels. Particular attention should be given to domestic economic management, effective mobilization and utilization of resources, including human. Special attention also needs to continue to be given to rationalization of public investment policies, protection of the environment, improvement of international competitiveness, agrarian structures and diversification of production, and improvement of policy design and implementation in general with a view to meeting the food security challenges of the 1990s.

The donor-induced fragmentation of agricultural research has had deleterious effect on food policy data (area, yields, prices) e.g. although donor projects usually include provision for data collection, the reason for the exercise is never well articulated. The result is also fragmentation of national capacity and lack of effort to build national capacities. With regard to food policy analysis, nearly all the countries have people concerned with the problem of hunger and poverty. But in many countries, they don't form a critical mass or have sufficient access to political power to have an influence on policy. Effective policy analysis requires a critical minimum-sized group to work on complex issues. Teams of external advisers, though might assist, can be of little help.

Africa's development partners continue to apply pressure on countries for policy dialogue, hence the urgent need for African countries to be more knowledgeable in the field of policy analysis. In order to generate this capacity, food policy research is greatly needed. Good policy research today is the basis for improved policy tomorrow and thereafter. Like farming systems research, changing technology accelerates the demands on policy research by constantly changing the data and relationships on which policy is based. There is clearly an urgent need for improving the government policy planning capacities and to reverse

the food crisis through policy analysis training. Countries cannot afford mismanagement, waste and inefficiencies brought about by bad policies. With political commitment, good analysis and careful implementation, food policy offers African countries an important vehicle for reconciling short-term equity with long-term growth and efficiency.

Alleviation of poverty should be a major function of the economy. Development programmes for Africa must be designed to eliminate poverty and the scourge of hunger. Development strategies already in place address this issue, but are yet to be fully implemented. To do so, Africans must not only make an effort, but also a sacrifice if need be. In this connection, the causes of hunger must be clearly understood; and the connections between these causes and the food system ought to be a starting point for the analysis and the design of programmes and policies that meet government objectives as contained in national food policies. Efforts will therefore be required to mitigate the adverse socio-economic effects of orthodox adjustment measures and to ensure that short-term actions are compatible with, and lead to medium- and long-term structural transformation.

An assessment undertaken in 1991 in Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe with the support of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Agency for International Development pointed to both convergence and conflicts between food-strategy and structural-adjustment goals and confirm the tendency of current macro-economic reforms to negatively affect the food consumption of the poor.^{18/} The economic policies imposed on debtors have, rather than curing the ills, caused untold human suffering and widespread environmental destruction, emptying debtor countries of their resources and rendering them increasingly less able to service their debts, let alone invest in economic and human recovery.

The need for a balanced approach in the use of natural resources must therefore, also be stressed. The ecosystem which underpin the economies of our countries is being seriously degraded, including loss of soil, grazing lands, and dried-up lakes and

streams. In Tanzania and Sudan, the tree is being depleted twice its sustainable level. Available statistics indicate that 91 per cent of total energy used in Tanzania was from fuelwood, meaning the burning up of 40 million cubic metres of wood. But the capacity of natural forests was only 19.5 million cubic metres. Elsewhere in the subregion, things are not better. There is the tragic case of Ethiopia. It is estimated that 50 years ago, some 60 per cent of the land in that country was covered with forests, but today only 3-5 per cent is forest. The depletion rate in Kenya is five times the sustainable level, as a result less than 3 per cent of its land is under forest cover. In West Africa, the coastal forest is disappearing by 5 per cent per annum. Reversal is therefore absolutely essential for socio-economic survival.

We consider that the twin objectives of protecting the environment and improving the living standards of the rural poor are compatible as long as we have an in-depth look at the economic, human, and technological prerequisites for sustainable development in a constant and comprehensive manner. And recognizing that the gap between developed and developing countries is accounted for by technology more than anything else, research effort in this direction must emphasize science and technology for food self-sufficiency. The objective of food self-sufficiency must be realized if we want to solve, among others, the external debt problem. African industry should be based on agriculture and local consumption, e.g. agricultural machinery, processing, transportation equipment, etc. If there is no progress in agriculture, Africa's largest sector, there will be no progress in Africa.

In all the above issues, Africa must do all it can to establish a solid common ground and cooperation, as individually the countries are too weak either in population or purchasing power. Interdependence is a sign of maturity and cooperation is essential for survival. Even the stronger countries are coming together economically, politically, militarily and scientifically. An African common market, for example, will reinforce the region's position in trade negotiations with the rest of the world. Hence, there is a need also for policy and planning to be undertaken at the subre-

gional level (ECOWAS, PTA, ECCASS, SADC, etc). The institutional framework should be strengthened by having a strong core of planners and analysts working closely with the national planning and programming structures. Efforts at the subregional level should aim at identifying areas that are amenable to coordination among countries, e.g. food self-sufficiency, research, agricultural policies and technology, natural resources development and management, trade and so on. The aim would be to minimize distortions and failures caused by lack of economic policy coordination across national boundaries and to maximize the efficiency of investment and production through increased trade and the relatively free flow of the factors of production, e.g. capital and labour across national boundaries. Indeed, regional cooperation must become an integral part of national policy making and planning process. One still sees the current economic groupings as falling short of the real needs of the African people.

Hunger is evil, and it is worse when hunger and loss of hope or faith to take action go together. Opening up new horizons in objectives and needed action will be required for those who have lost them; and this will call for inter-country cooperation among the African countries which must identify their resources and priorities to enhance food and agricultural production in the continent. A 5 per cent growth rate is ambitious, but not impossible. To achieve the growth target, all the African countries will need to create an enabling environment, harness new technologies, build and strengthen considerably their own capacities, and safeguard natural resources. Fundamentally, there are three legs to the stool of agricultural progress in Africa: it must be technologically feasible to increase yields to raise output; economically there have to be incentives (economic policies) not just exhortations; and organizationally farmers must be provided with the delivery system - transport and institutions.

The most important impediment to the realization of the above long-term domestic policy objectives is the danger of succumbing to the temptations of short-term gains and momentary political dividends. Furthermore, none of the above measures will

go far, nor will much external aid be forthcoming, unless governance in Africa improves; not to mention the unpalatable reality that in the 1990s Africa will be living

in a capital-scarce world economy. Already the aid tap has been turned down to a trickle; and it is not going to be turned on again for a long time.

ENDNOTES

1/ The experience of the more developed LDCs during the last four decades shows that the countries which had rapid agricultural growth had also rapid industrial growth. Similar historical relationship between agricultural development and general economic growth in the industrial countries can be found. Increased agricultural productivity appears therefore to be an essential prelude to Africa's industrial growth.

$$2/ \quad SSR = \frac{\text{Domestic Production}}{\text{Domestic Utilization}} \times 100$$

3/ And if the export or industrial crops continue, often with the aid of external assistance, to place claim on the best lands, a large share of already meagre agricultural investment, research efforts, the delivery system, etc. with unequal support given to staple food crops for domestic consumption. Historical records indicate that apart from hybrid maize research in Zimbabwe (1932-1949) and in Kenya (1955-1964), most research during the colonial period concentrated on export crops. This legacy continues after more than 30 years of independence. One ought to add that even research on maize in these countries was prompted by the fact that maize was of commercial interest to the settler groups.

4/ In sharp contrast with Africa, the incidence of abject poverty is likely to have been substantially reduced in East and South Asia. The achievements of China, and to some extent, India are very impressive. The two governments have succeeded in translating growth into poverty alleviation, thereby also reducing the number of hungry people. In China, a doubling of income in rural areas in the 1980s pulled millions of rural households out of abject poverty. In India, anti-poverty programmes provided income-earning opportunities.

5/ Productivity, though, can be increased significantly through management even where input levels are low, i.e. productivity is knowledge- and management-intensive.

6/ A survey on multilaterally financed adjustment programmes reveals an emphasis on positive foreign exchange availability in order to ensure debt-service payments. And the primary task of the Bretton Woods Institutions is now to manage debtor economies in such a way that these debts can be serviced. To accumulate this hard currency and service its debt, an African country must increase its exports (including the destruction of tropical forests) and reduce government spending - depriving their people of basic necessities. As a result, there have been extraordinary outflows from debtor countries as a whole equivalent to six Marshall Plans - US\$ 1,300 billion between 1982 and 1990. As a group, the debtor countries began the 1990s with 61 per cent more in debt than they were in 1982. For Africa south of the Sahara, debt increased by 113 per cent during this period. With regard to Eastern and Southern Africa, the countries owed some \$ 45 billion in 1991 excluding Angola and Djibouti. This is a rise of more than 203 per cent from about \$ 14.7 in 1980. Indeed, until the end of the 1980s, the position of the IMF and the World Bank was that African countries needed to pay their debt in full, and that a confrontation over doing so could undermine international financial stability.

7/ Faced with economic crisis, governments have had to focus on resolving short-term financial and budgetary problems. The result has been that long-term problems, e.g. the transformation of economic and social production structures and human resource development have been pushed into second place. And development planning itself has become marginalized. The idea of planning on a longer-term is being increasingly accepted in the international community. In this connection, three levels of planning should be distinguished and linked, namely, long-term forecasting (covering a time span of one generation); strategic medium-term planning (from six to ten years) comprising *inter-alia* sectoral policies, a resource mobilization strategy, and a macro-economic framework; and short-term planning and budget programming,

dealing with a restoration of short-term equilibrium. A national community should have an overall vision of its past evolution as well as its long-term future potential.

8/ The New International Economic Order (NIEO) that never was, is precisely because there is no such thing as world economic disorder - what exists is an unequal sharing of wealth. In this respect, the world is quite orderly.

9/ With regard to planning in a market economy, the planning approach should be to indicate in advance to the public and the business sector what is needed to encourage and facilitate economic development (i.e. indicative planning), rather than to plan for actual production, distribution and consumption targets. Indicative planning recognizes forces in the market, macro-economics, legal framework, and corrects market imperfections and failures, e.g. measures to prevent costly monopolies. Government intervention provides public goods and services for which profit prospects are low and risks high, e.g. in the development and use of new technologies.

10/ We must distinguish between emergency food aid/import needs which are occasioned by real emergency, and structural food aid needs resulting from structural rigidities problems - L-R food aid/import needs. We must further make the distinction between "transitory food insecurity" (famine) and "chronic food insecurity" (persistent hunger).

11/ It is clear that Africa has the potential for recovery. According to estimates, Africa has oil reserves amounting to 55 billion barrels; 5,900 billion cubic metres of natural gas; 88.5 billion tonnes of coal. It has also 1.7 billion tonnes of uranium reserves; 200,000 megawatts of hydro-electric potential; and great potential in solar and wind energy and biomass and animal energy - 200 million horses, donkeys, camels, and cattle. That so far, the Continent has failed to use these to sustain its population, leaving it in abject poverty, shows irony in developmental priorities at continental and global levels. Africa has been talking too much of the need to use its resources for the advancement of its peoples, and doing too little about it. Some 4,200 billion cubic metres of fresh water

flows out of Africa into the ocean every year - 10 per cent of this water would increase Africa's food production by 10 per cent. Only 3 per cent of Africa's hydro-electric potential has been harnessed; and fuelwood efficiency, which could be 20-30 per cent, is currently about 10 per cent.

12/ Africa's debt rose sharply during the 1980s, when prices of its commodity exports began a long and steep decline. By 1992, the continent's total debt of some \$ 290 billion was about two and a half times greater than in 1980 and it is now 90 per cent of its GNP. For Africa south of the Sahara, it is 110 per cent of the GNP. By 1993, the region's total external debt had reached \$ 302 billion. To service this debt, Africa paid over \$ 26 billion to its creditors in 1991 - 30 per cent of its export earnings. For a number of countries, it is 50 per cent. Debt service is the priority of the creditor countries that determine IMF and World Bank policy, presently the most powerful political agencies. The debt crisis has given creditor countries the chance to intervene in the management of debtors' economies using these agencies. Debtor governments have from time to time called for debt relief but have never collectively confronted the creditors. But this debt should really not be seen as a national problem. Different social classes in debtor countries have vastly divergent interests and are unequally affected. The crisis hardly affects the debtor-country elites who are usually insulated from the distress. It is therefore not surprising that the pressures exerted by NGOs in both North and South have so far failed to alter basic debt-management policies.

13/ When as many as 115 or 120 countries compete for export markets in some 20 countries, the obvious rules must apply: the few importers will dictate the terms, prices of exporters' goods will fall. At the beginning of the 1990s, Northern purchasers of raw materials found their prices lower than they had been at any time since the 1930s.

14/ We must emphasize the need to strengthen analytical capacity within national governments for dealing with competing political pressures from consumers and producers. The dual role of food prices-determining food consumption lev-

els (consumers, especially among the poor), and the adequacy of food supplies through incentives to farmers - raises an obvious dilemma for food policy analysts. The inverse impact of food prices on producers and consumers creates significant dilemma which, if managed, while trying to achieve all the above-mentioned food policy objectives, is the essence of a successful food policy. That success requires an understanding of the political economy of food prices and tools for managing a country's border price.

^{15/}A.K. Cairncross, Factors in Economic Development, p. 15.

^{16/} J. G. Blase, "Role of Institutions in Agricultural Development", in Institutions

in Agricultural Development, Iowa State University, 1971, p. 9.

^{17/} Numerous studies show that differences in economic growth originate from differences in savings ratios and investment efficiency. The Asian NICs achieved substantially higher savings rates and greater investment efficiency than their counterparts in Africa and elsewhere due, among others, to positive real interest rates. The East Asian economies have also been trade and investment driven while their African counterparts have been aid and debt driven.

^{18/} UN WFC, Progress Report by the Executive Director on the Work of the Council, WFC/1992/3, 1992, p. 8.

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ANNEX

- Table 1 - Africa, Index of Total Agricultural Production
- Table 2 - Africa, Index of Food Production
- Table 3 - Eastern and Southern Africa: Production, Demand and Self-Sufficiency in Cereals
- Table 4 - Food Supply Indicators in Low-income Food-deficit African Countries
- Table 5 - The Situation of Abject Poverty in Developed Countries 1985 and 1991
- Table 6 - Underweight Children in Developing Countries, by Region, 1975-1990
- Table 7 - Changes in Mortality of Children under the Age of Five, Various Periods
- Table 8 - Progress in Reducing Child Mortality Rate, 1980-90 and Required Progress, 1990-2000, Selected African Countries

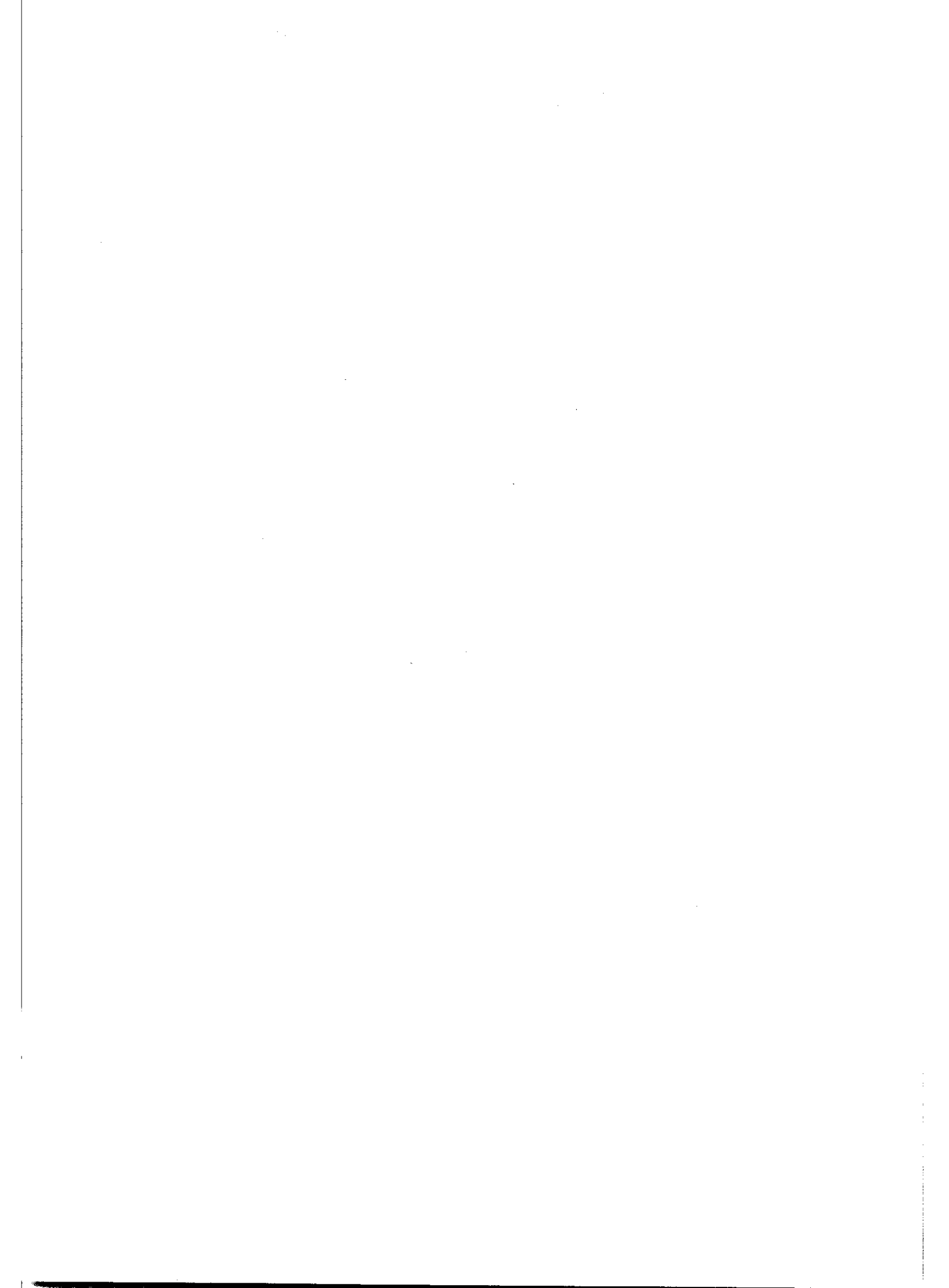


Table 1. Index of Agricultural Production

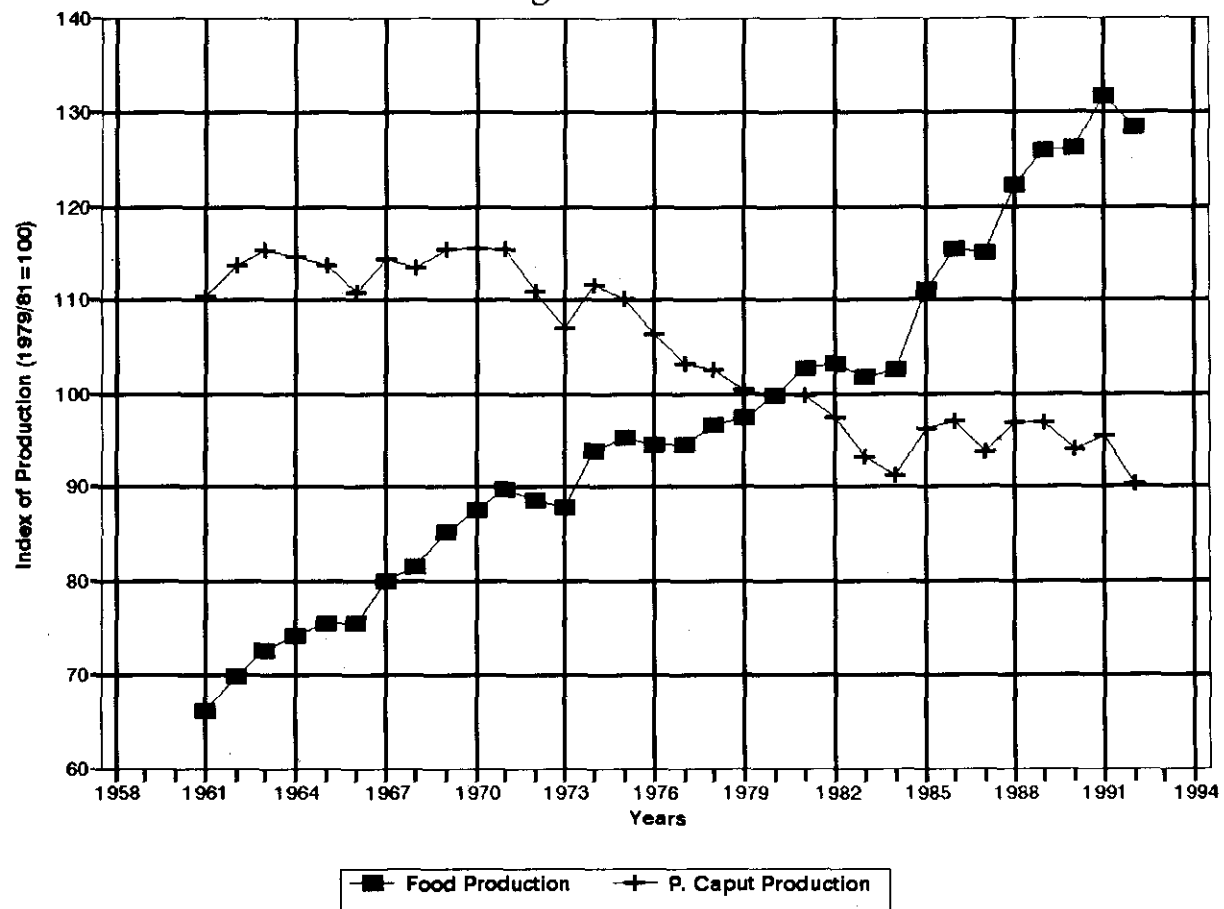


Table 2. Africa: Index of Food Production

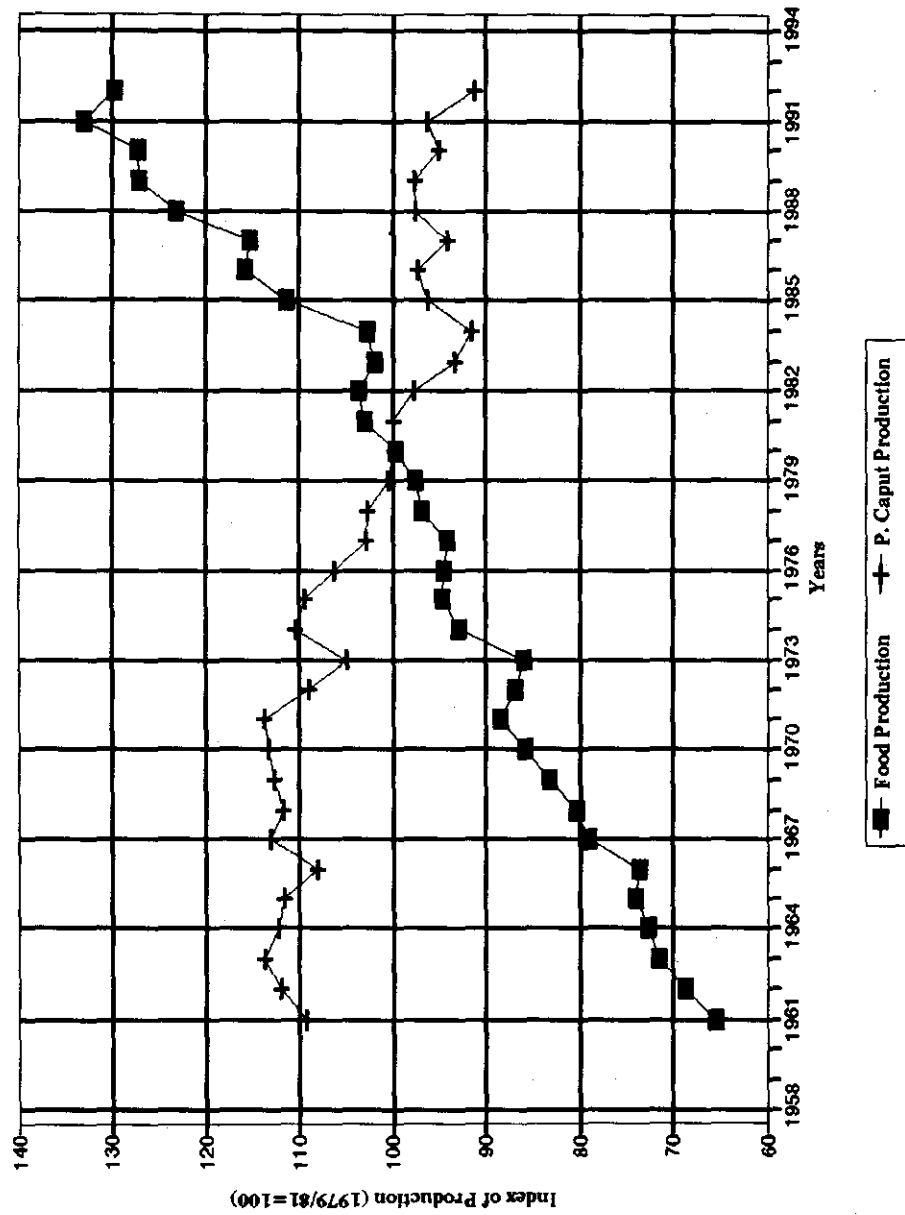


Table 3. Eastern and Southern Africa: Production, Demand and Self-Sufficiency in Cereals

	Cereals 1961-69			Cereals 1970-79			Cereals 80-90			Starchy roots 1980-90			Pulses 1980-90		
	P	D	P/D	P	D	P/D	P	D	P/D SSR	P	D	P/D	P	D	P/D
Angola	541	380	1.42	503	467	1.08	337	659	0.51	1897	1874	1.01	40	57	0.70
Botswana	33	76	0.43	64	106	0.60	40	170	0.24	7	11	0.64	15	15	1.0
Comoros	11	19	0.58	13	27	0.48	16	43	0.37	54	50	1.08	6	5	1.20
Djibouti	0	13	0	0	23	0	0	46	0	0	2	0	0	1	0
Ethiopia	4146	3646	1.14	4646	4120	1.13	5785	5713	1.01	1831	1667	1.10	743	634	1.17
Kenya	1824	1433	1.27	2519	2026	1.24	2783	2705	1.03	1340	1196	1.12	233	157	1.48
Lesotho	219	186	1.18	202	231	0.87	157	303	0.52	6	10	0.60	6	9	0.67
Madagascar	1411	994	1.42	1657	1259	1.32	1838	1559	1.18	2845	1805	1.58	49	37	1.32
Malawi	1014	700	1.45	1357	959	1.42	1396	1237	1.13	515	404	1.27	235	127	1.85
Mauritius	0	120	0	1	147	0	3	185	0.02	18	18	1.0	1	9	0.11
Mozambique	669	657	1.02	694	765	0.91	644	966	0.67	3981	3848	1.03	81	80	1.0
Namibia	66	87	0.76	78	119	0.66	111	171	0.65	235	180	1.31	6	14	0.43
Seychelles	0	6	0	0	8	0	0	9	0	0	1	0	0	-	-
Somalia	267	288	0.93	243	318	0.76	487	712	0.68	44	36	1.22	14	14	1.0
South Africa	7232	3556	2.03	10871	4616	2.36	11635	6289	1.85	1055	752	1.40	106	96	1.10
Swaziland	51	48	1.06	99	72	1.38	120	105	1.14	11	8	1.38	4	3	1.33
Tanzania	1113	916	1.22	1895	1479	1.28	3413	2641	1.29	7653	6438	1.19	387	313	1.24
Uganda	1084	540	2.01	1512	824	1.83	1242	944	1.32	4831	4048	1.19	380	301	1.26
Zambia	893	654	1.37	1298	897	1.45	1238	1339	0.92	244	231	1.06	9	7	1.29
Zimbabwe	1328	806	1.65	2044	1101	1.86	2390	1429	1.67	104	96	1.08	0	37	0
Eastern & Southern Africa	21905	15126	1.45	29696	19564	1.52	33635	27225	1.24	12832	22675	0.57	2315	1916	1.21
E&SA - SA	14673	11570	1.27	18825	14948	1.26	22000	20936	1.05	11777	21923	0.54	2209	1820	1.21

P = Production; D = Food Demand

Self sufficiency ratio of cereals = Production of cereals/Cereal food utilized.

Source: Agrostat data, Food Balance Sheets, Nov. 1993.

Table 4. Food-supply indicators in low-income food-deficit African countries

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
	Daily energy supply (DES) per capita	As % of minimum intake	Changes in DES	Index food production per capita	Food production as share of total supply	
					1979-81	1987-89
Ethiopia	1640	70	-0.90	85.1	99.4	87.0
Mozambique	1665	71	-0.82	85.5	64.0	50.4
Angola	1802	77	-2.01	80.1	53.3	46.1
Chad	1809	76	0.08	97.2	86.1	88.6
Sierra Leone	1841	80	-1.50	88.0	74.1	70.3
Comoros	1894	81	0.80	90.4	39.8	26.6
Somalia	1932	84	-0.03	98.8	51.6	70.4
Rwanda	1945	84	-0.39	76.0	93.9	81.4
Namibia	1968	84	0.14	94.7	61.1	61.0
Burundi	1998	86	-0.62	94.7	88.6	92.4
Central African Rep.	2009	89	-0.26	95.1	86.2	66.8
Sudan	2029	86	-1.98	75.4	102.9	85.1
Zambia	2054	89	-0.77	98.4	68.0	101.7
Zaire	2061	93	-0.64	96.6	70.2	67.1
Malawi	2098	90	-0.54	82.8	99.3	92.9
Uganda	2136	92	0.20	92.3	89.1	79.9
Togo	2141	93	-0.08	97.8	83.9	87.8
Kenya	2160	93	-0.39	106.5	79.6	88.8
Madagascar	2181	96	-1.49	90.6	88.4	91.6
Guinea	2193	95	-0.47	87.1	85.4	77.4
Cameroon	2197	95	-0.05	90.0	79.9	63.0
Tanzania	2209	95	-0.30	88.3	96.1	95.4
Mali	2236	95	3.04	98.1	85.7	92.1
Ghana	2246	98	1.63	109.2	78.2	78.9
Benin	2246	98	1.22	118.2	84.5	76.3
Burkina Faso	2286	96	2.64	114.4	91.9	92.8
Niger	2297	98	0.55	80.3	105.5	88.2
Lesotho	2328	102	-0.54	81.0	54.9	42.4
Gambia	2351	99	1.77	91.2	57.0	47.7
Botswana	2370	102	1.32	78.9	23.1	25.2
Senegal	2375	100	-0.14	103.6	62.5	61.6
Liberia	2404	104	-0.01	86.2	63.4	60.2
Guinea-Bissau	2471	107	2.87	101.8	61.7	84.6
Côte-d'Ivoire	2579	112	-0.08	98.0	56.9	55.7
Mauritania	2601	113	2.76	89.2	21.7	39.0
Congo	2603	117	0.66	92.1	16.2	8.1
Swaziland	2612	113	0.53	92.7	61.0	62.9
Cape Verde	2716	116	0.64	124.5	6.7	21.0
Morocco	3007	124	1.37	134.5	60.6	85.9
Egypt	3327	133	0.79	123.2	56.1	54.2

Source: FAO, Agrostat.

Table 5. The situation of abject poverty in developing countries, 1985 and 1991

	<u>Situation in 1985^{a/}</u>		<u>Situation in 1991^{b/}</u>	
	Number	Share of total abject poverty	Number	Share of total abject poverty
	(millions)	(percent)	(millions)	(percent)
Sub-Saharan Africa	120	19	140	24
East Asia	120	19	69	14
China	80	13	39	9
South Asia	300	48	260	45
India	250	40	205	36
Middle East/N. Africa	40	6	46	8
L. America/Caribbean	50	8	53	9
Developing All	630	100	569	100

^{a/} The World Bank estimates.

^{b/} WFC estimates derived from the World Bank data.

Source: The World Bank; WFC.

Table 6. Underweight children in developing countries by region, 1975-1990

Region	Situation in 1980		Situation in 1985		Situation in 1990	
	Number ^{a/}	Percent ^{b/}	Number ^{a/}	Percent ^{b/}	Number ^{a/}	Percent ^{b/}
Sub-Saharan	21.0	29.1	26.1	31.1	30.2	30.8
Near East/N. Africa	5.0	17.2	5.0	15.1	4.8	13.3
South Asia	89.9	63.6	100.0	61.1	101.1	58.6
South-East Asia	23.4	42.8	23.4	40.0	22.4	37.7
China	20.4	23.8	21.1	21.3	23.6	21.0
C. America/Caribbean	3.1	17.7	2.8	15.2	3.0	15.3
South America	4.4	13.2	3.6	10.1	3.0	8.2
Developing All	167.0	38.1	182.0	36.9	188.0	34.8

^{a/} Millions.

^{b/} Percentage share of total under-5 child population.

Source: United Nations, ACC/SCN.

Table 7. Changes in mortality of children under the age of five, various periods

Region	Number of deaths (millions)			Mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)		
	1975-80 ^{a/}	1980-85 ^{a/}	1990 ^{b/}	1975-80 ^{a/}	1980-85 ^{a/}	1990 ^{b/}
Sub-Saharan	3.5	3.8	4.2	218	203	170
Near East/N. Africa	1.1	0.9	1.1	159	128	80
C. America/Caribbean	0.4	0.4	0.3	99	87	78
South America	0.7	0.7	0.6	101	89	55
South Asia	6.8	6.2	5.7	203	177	169
South-East Asia	1.6	1.3	1.1	129	111	69
China	1.2	1.1	1.0	58	55	42
Developing All	15.3	14.4	13.9	152	138	108

^{a/} United Nations, ST/ESA/SER.A/105.

^{b/} Adapted from UNICEF data.

Source: United Nations; United Nations Children's Fund.

Table 8. Progress in reducing child mortality rate, 1980-90, and required progress, 1990-2000, selected African countries (average annual rate)

Negative reduction rate ^{a/}	Required progress ^{b/}	Reduction rate < 2% ^{a/}	Required progress ^{b/}	Reduction rate < 3% ^{a/}	Required progress ^{b/}
Mozambique	14.5	Mali	14.0	Senegal	9.7
Angola	14.3	Sierra Leone	13.0	Madagascar	9.2
		Malawi	12.8	Sudan	9.0
		Guinea	12.2	Central Afr. Rep	8.8
		Burkina Faso	11.8	Togo	7.4
		Ethiopia	11.5	Côte d'Ivoire	6.6
		Niger	11.5	Zaire	6.2
		Chad	11.3	Lesotho	6.1
		Somalia	11.2	Libya	4.7
		Mauritania	11.2	Congo	4.5
		Liberia	10.7	Kenya	4.3
		Rwanda	10.4	Botswana	4.1
		Burundi	10.1		
		Tanzania	8.9		
		Namibia	8.7		
		Nigeria	8.7		
		Gabon	8.5		
		Uganda	8.5		
		Cameroon	7.5		
		Benin	7.4		
		Ghana	6.9		
		Zambia	5.6		

^{a/} Average annual reduction achieved during 1980-90.

^{b/} Average annual reduction required between 1990-2000 in order to reach the target of reducing U5 MR below 70 per 1,000 live births set by the 1990 World Summit for Children.

Source: UNICEF.

FROM RELIEF AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY: REHABILITATION, RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT WITH TRANSFORMATION AS THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION¹

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INTRODUCTION

During the 1992, Somalia became a symbol of Africa's tragedy as famine caused by clan and ethnic fighting claimed more than 300,000 lives. Thanks to a massive - if belated - humanitarian assistance, many more lives were saved. However, despite the end of violent hostilities, still more than one million Somalis remain at risk from malnutrition, hunger, the resurgence of conflicts, their survival still depending on the availability and timely delivery of food aid.

In 1994, the history repeated itself and within a period of six weeks (April-May 1994), some estimated 300,000 to 500,000 died in ethnic fighting in Rwanda following the death of President Habyarimana in a plane crash on the 6th of April 1994 which also claimed the life of the President of Burundi. More than one million Rwandese crossed the boundaries to become refugees in Tanzania, Burundi, Uganda and Zaire. Despite the unquestioned will of the international community to assist, the rapidity and unpredictable movement of so many people in a short period of time made food assistance an unsurmountable operation.

Somalia and Rwanda are potent examples of the devastating impact of armed conflicts on countries' economic and social fabrics, on food security and human lives in Africa. From Liberia to the Horn of Africa, from Sudan to Mozambique, the refugees and displaced people created by armed conflicts have been among the most vulnerable to economic disasters, malnutrition, hunger,

starvation and death. In 1993, it was estimated by the United Nations that some 8 million Africans have fled from their own countries to escape civil wars, tribal and clan conflicts. Another 15 million have been internally displaced, having fled from their villages, in search of greater security in other parts of their own country. In Mozambique alone, fifteen years of warfare have left 5 million people displaced and a further 2 million as refugees in neighbouring countries.

In some instances, starvation has been used as a weapon in Africa's conflicts with systematic disruption of food systems, destruction of crops, disruption of markets, forcing farmers to leave their lands, threatening thousands of lives.

Women and children are among the main victims of these civil, tribal and clan strife and armed conflicts. The proliferation of orphanages in many affected countries are testament to the plight of hundreds of thousands of children across Africa left without parents. Additionally, many children have been mutilated, disabled by mines and psychologically traumatized, and are now in need of care and rehabilitation. In countries affected by conflicts, women and girls have been subjected to sexual abuse, and their already disadvantaged position in nutritional status, health and education has further deteriorated. Furthermore, in many, if not almost all of these affected countries, the diversion of male labour into the army during the armed conflicts or civil wars left women to shoulder an added burden in food production and marketing. The collapse of family

1 This is a modified version of a document presented at the OAU/UNHCR Commemorative Symposium on Refugees and Problems of Forced Population Displacements in Africa in September 1994.

networks, which provided a buffer in times of need, has left them to assume even greater responsibilities, in refugee or conflict situations, for the care and maintenance of children and elderly relatives.

In many of the countries, communities which are already having difficulties in satisfying their own basic needs are now weighed down with the burden of the thousands of people who flock in completely destitute. In Ethiopia or Kenya, the number of refugees and returnees from the conflict which was raging in Somalia run into several dozen thousands. In Southern Africa, the violence in Angola and Mozambique has uprooted an even greater number of people who have mostly settled in Malawi. In West Africa, one third of the 2.5 million of Liberians have had to seek refuge in neighbouring countries and, in January 1993, an estimated number of more than 300,000 Southern Togolese have had to seek refuge in Benin and in Ghana. In Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire, million of refugees from ethnic armed conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi crossed the boundaries in search of safety.

The havoc wrought by armed conflict is ruining the development efforts of the warring countries, destroying such infrastructure as roads, paths, public works, apartment buildings and houses. All these have to be rebuilt at the very place where human and material resources are lacking.

The case of Somalia yesterday, the case of Rwanda more recently, constitute the most serious human tragedies that Africa has faced since the events of Ethiopia and the Sudan in 1984 - 1985. What took place in Somalia and Rwanda represent a challenge far more serious than what took place in the 1980s. Physical obstacles to food distribution were further compounded by chronic poverty, a beleaguered economy, the absence of a central democratic structure, the total destruction of a greater part of the country's infrastructure and a deplorable lack of coordination at all levels. The Somalia and Rwanda tragedies show how far countries can slide into anarchy nowadays and up to what point people can be have and lead their countries to the brink of destruction through clan, tribal and ethnic armed conflicts. Though looking cannot be peculiar to Somalia and Rwanda alone, the

vast majority of the Somali and Rwandese people, particularly, the poorest, are still at the brink of famine and are threatened by total annihilation as a result of malnutrition and related diseases. Millions of people have been displaced in these countries and many other millions have sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

To cope with these situations and on account of the general poverty of African people, international opinion has been mobilized on a continuous basis to provide emergency relief and humanitarian assistance. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees which has been given an international mandate to protect refugees and to seek lasting solutions to their problems has been working along these lines. It is supported in its work by FAO, the World Food Programme and the United Nations Department for Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF. Many countries are also intervening directly to provide emergency relief as do specialized NGOs.

The problems to be solved are many and diverse. They include:

(a) Provision of food and health care - because they swell the number of people whom the country is already finding it difficult to cater for, refugees live under precarious conditions and often suffer from malnutrition, diarrhoea, skin diseases, eye infections and respiratory ailments;

(b) Drinking water supply - this is a constant area of major concern. In refugee camps, several diseases have their causes in the domestic use of polluted and infected water;

(c) The education of young refugees is also another difficult factor to keep under control when people are displaced. The rehabilitation of young people and children of school-going age in schools of the host country is, indeed, a difficult and delicate matter;

(d) Accommodation - these are generally inadequate public buildings such as schools, churches and municipal buildings which serve as housing for the new arrivals when they are not made to live in hastily-erected tents;

(e) The rehabilitation of refugees in the productive life of their places of settlement or in their places of origin which had been affected by disasters;

(f) The rebuilding of the development infrastructure destroyed by armed conflicts or natural disaster.

The ending of the cold war raised hopes that armed conflicts, for so long fuelled by superpower rivalries would become a thing of the past. The UN's New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was a reflection of those hopes, signalling a drive for social and economic development.

In Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Eritrea, the ending of devastating wars has made this a possibility - and it is crucial that the opportunity for recovery, reconstruction and development is grasped. Elsewhere, unfortunately, the glimmer of hope has been overwhelmed by violent and deadly conflicts with countries such as Rwanda, Liberia, Angola, the Sudan, Somalia, etc. still in the grip of tribal, ethnic, clanic armed conflicts and civil wars.

However, post conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and economic and social development also pose an immense and daunting challenge, as impoverished refugees and displaced people return home to rebuild their lives with few - if any - resources. Nevertheless, where the destruction of the countries wealth is very often not caused by foreign "injunctions" or natural calamities, the bulk of reconstruction, social and economic development must remain the duty of nationals themselves, international community playing only a catalytic role.

At one point, people thought that Europe and North America were the exits for the refugees' problems. Unfortunately, it must be said, increased migration to Europe and North America of refugees and displaced persons is resulting in more restrictions on entrance and closing of borders. The consequent rising xenophobia is leading to violence in Europe and North America, limiting options for refugees and the displaced people, pointing to the international community to seek realistic long term and sustainable solution to the root causes of the frightening outflow of those people. Any acceptable solution must certainly address the poverty

issue, human rights, good governance, accountability, growth with equity or economic development with transformation.

AFRICA: A CONTINENT IN CRISIS

Whether in the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Ethiopia, Uganda, the Sudan), in Central Africa (Chad, Rwanda, Burundi), East Africa, and Southern Africa (Angola, Mozambique, South Africa), West Africa (Liberia, Sierra Leone) or in North Africa, from the Mediterranean to the Cap, from the Atlantic to the Horn of Africa, all kinds of extremely serious conflicts have developed.

The spread of all types of conflicts and the serious consequences arising therefrom raise the crucial issue of assistance to the afflicted people particularly when they cannot be given effective relief by their own State. The consequences are what non governmental organizations try to address in coming to the aid of people who have become destitute.

At times, figures and statistics have a way of obfuscating the bitter truth. There are times when figures just do not make sense as in the case of Rwanda. Conservative estimates put the total number of people killed in six weeks mayhem at 500,000. Half a million people sacrificed at the altar of ethnic conflict. But here, the figure is but an arithmetic statement; it does not tell us the real story. It is a bland statement, devoid of emotions, so in a way it tends to drain the steam out of the story, it fails to give the right context to an otherwise historic phenomenon, however depressing.

Failure to defuse these crises has led to a growing dependence on the international community. Inadequate support for reconstruction and development process could threaten the peace in Eritrea, Ethiopia and Mozambique, depriving millions of people of their right to a more secure future. UN and OAU support for peace initiatives other countries are being undermined by insufficient financial and political backing without which, there is a real danger of countries continuing to tear themselves apart, with devastating consequences for development.

Over the latter half of this century, the Security Council has developed a wide array of instruments for the settlement of con-

flicts among States. It had, however, few tried and tested mechanisms to guide it in coping with the plethora of conflicts which broke out in the world and particularly in Africa following the end of the Cold War. A number of these conflicts, more particularly those in what used to be Yugoslavia, in the Sudan, Liberia, Somalia, Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, etc. have endangered and continue to place at risk the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians.

The proliferation of interventions to protect people from the scourge of war and conflicts has led some people to speak of the advent of a new international humanitarian order which challenges the principle of national sovereignty in applying the right of intervention. It follows, it would appear, that the idea of non-interference in the internal affairs of States is yielding ground wherever people in danger are not being assisted by their own State. Under certain circumstances, as in the case of Rwanda, Somalia there is definitely a strong need of intervention against the will of parties concerned, when hundred of thousands of lives are being destroyed and the belligerents are refusing to negotiate.

In the face of so much suffering, voices have increasingly been raised at the international level to request that more should be done for people exposed to the dangers of internal conflicts. Pressure groups argued that the time had come to reconsider the historic - and legitimate - concern relating to the sovereignty of nations particularly when States were no longer able to protect a greater number of their own citizens and that the time had come to think seriously about what is, today, commonly known as the humanitarian right to intervene. With the case of Somalia yesterday, Africa underwent its first test of implementing the humanitarian right of intervention.

In cooperation with regional and non-governmental organizations the United Nations system at large strove, within one year, to end the conflict in Somalia and provide assistance that the country badly needed. But then, it was not able to act effectively since it was faced with the most dangerous situation that it has ever encountered within the framework of a humanitarian mission of this nature. Even food meant for famine victims was looted or requisitioned as pay-

ment for "protection", and those involved in the aid operations were themselves targets.

It can be said that the situation we faced in Somalia was new and disquieting. Collectively, the international community and the States that with the relevant regional organizations compose it were used to distributing aid to those who need it in a context where national governments erected obstacles. Furthermore, they knew how to distribute aid through fragile local institutions by using a low quality and poorly maintained infrastructure. But then, they had never acted without coordination amongst themselves, in a political vacuum where each stage of aid operations must be negotiated with clan or sub-clan heads, often heavily armed and operating in a precarious environment. Similarly, they had never had to work in an environment where there was no administration, no police force, where local NGOs are few, where coordination was absent at all levels and where the economic and industrial base of the country had been virtually destroyed. These phenomena constituted new cooperation challenges to the international community, relevant regional organizations, member States, and NGOs. In fact, Somalia was one of the most serious challenges that the United Nations has had to face during its 47 years of existence. Admittedly, the case of Somalia which consists in resolving a serious national conflict in the absence of a government or an authority that can act as a spokesman was not provided for in the Charter of the United Nations. Nevertheless, the case of Rwanda has put the UN deep in a situation worse than the Somali case.

Without necessarily sliding into fatal-pessimism, it could be said that Africa is a continent in serious crisis. Practically none of its countries has been spared the evils hampering the development of the most backward continent of the world. From North to South, East to West, the proud and dynamic people of Africa are in the throes of civil wars, clanic and ethnic armed conflicts, subjected to bankrupt political systems and affected by problems of refugees, drought, desertification, corruption, AIDS and other most alarming circumstances. This continent, for all these reasons, and others, political and economic such as the

deteriorating terms of trade, a debilitating growing external debt, national economic marasms, is now in a permanent state of emergency.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE : THE SHORT TERM SOLUTION

Under Chapter VIII of its Charter which allows for the conclusion of agreements and the involvement of regional organizations in the settlement of regional conflicts having an impact on international peace and security and in its three-pronged strategy, the United Nations Organizations has a central and unique role to play in conducting operations and in promoting and coordinating the complementary efforts of competent regional organizations and the international community with a view to achieving the goals and ideals of the Charter. The Organization also bears the primary responsibility for effectively coordinating the activities of the United Nations system itself in order to ensure that the activities of the various regional organizations and specialized agencies as well as the NGOs become complementary and mutually reinforcing. Indeed, the United Nations system has been constantly readapting, re-orienting and strengthening its programmes in order to enhance their usefulness and to make them more responsive to future challenges. This concern lies at the heart of the urgency with which collective universal and regional measures must be taken to cope with the challenge of an increasing number of conflicts that threaten international peace and security. Africa must contribute effectively to this task not only for its own sake but also for that of its people and of the world at large.

The preventive diplomacy to which the Secretary-General is so attached is not confined to humanitarian assistance and peace keeping alone. It also has an economic and social dimension. We need to conduct together an objective assessment of the situation in Africa, subregion by subregion and country by country so as to be able to anticipate, before it is too late, the material means of helping Africans to live or to survive since, in cases, the issue is one of sheer survival. To attain this objective, the United Nations needs all the help it can get by mobilizing all the energies, mainly of African regional organizations which consti-

tute an indispensable link in the chain but which, at times, do not have the means to fulfil their mission.

Like all United Nations activities, humanitarian assistance which encompasses emergency relief and often goes beyond that, is derived from the ideals and principles of the Charter and from the decisions of the General Assembly. Given the fact that the nature of crises has become more complex, the scope of emergency relief has been widened to take into account other human considerations. Indeed, over the years, cases involving the loss of human life, substantial flows of refugees, massive displacement of people and destruction of property have become wide spread. In the concern with strengthening its capacity to respond to complex emergency situations and to render more effective the collective efforts of the international community, the United Nations decided, in December 1991, to define more specifically its role in emergency situations and to set up a special fund to finance related activities. The guiding principles annexed to General Assembly resolution 46/182 dated 19 December 1991 emphasized, among other things, that humanitarian assistance should be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality. The sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of Member States should be fully respected in accordance with the Charter. Assistance was to be provided with the consent of the country affected and, in principle, at its request. The primary role in initiating, organizing, coordinating and delivering humanitarian assistance on its territory belongs to the affected country and, concerned Governments, together with the international community, should pay particular attention to disaster prevention and forwarding planning in this regard. There is a close link between emergency preparedness, rehabilitation and development which should provide a basis for instituting a series of integrated programmes and projects. Consequently, the principles annexed to the aforementioned resolution 46/182, stipulate that for the transition from the emergency relief to reconstruction and development to take place smoothly, emergency assistance should be so provided as to support reconstruction and long-term development. Put differently, emergency relief and humanitarian assistance should

always be considered within the context of long-term development and with an eye to preventing the crisis from recurring. Humanitarian assistance should be undergirded by the principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality. Relief and Humanitarian assistance should and must therefore be considered as a short term solution, paving the way for the needed medium to long term solution namely: rehabilitation, reconstruction and development with transformation as the only lasting solution to the real causes of those destructive conflicts and civil wars.

One of the major consequences of crippling poverty, natural and man made disasters in Africa, has been the massive increase of refugees and displaced persons. The phenomena has in turn compounded the persisting poverty and famine. Presently, Africa registers between 25 - 30 million refugees and displaced persons. Although the status of refugees is well clarified by the UN and UNHCR, Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), UNICEF, FAO and WFP are rendering the required assistance, there are no comparable structures for assisting the continuously growing number of displaced persons. There is an urgent need for additional legal and humanitarian mechanisms to be put in place to assist and protect internally displaced populations. Such mechanisms should also include a search for long term and sustainable solutions to the root causes: clan and ethnic armed conflicts, civil wars, environmental disasters, famine and poverty.

Immediate assistance for long-term reconstruction requires safety and political stability. It was from this medium- and long-term perspective that the Economic Commission for Africa and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) decided to advocate the adoption of the approach based on a close linkage between rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, between the short, the medium and the long term.

GOING BEYOND THE EMERGENCY AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE: LINKING THE SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG TERM

The end of the Cold War, the need for economic recovery and the spread of pluralism have all combined to shape the new

framework in which the role of the United Nations is being redefined within a new world context whose objective is to meet the challenges of this new era on the economic, social, intellectual and political fronts.

Obviously, the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights took these observations into account by introducing two new dimensions: the right of peoples to self-determination and the third generation rights of people to development, peace and the environment. This policy is certainly a matter for international organizations, developed countries, non-governmental organizations and everyone else but it also happens to be particularly a matter to be decided by Africans themselves.

One should keep in mind the fact that merely coping with emergency situations is not enough. Only a genuine development policy can, in the final analysis, make Africa a partner in the international scheme of things. However essential humanitarian assistance may be, it cannot serve as a substitute or pretext. It must necessarily be accompanied by a concern to move on from the emergency situation by establishing such political, economic and social structures capable of placing Africans in charge of their future. This means to say that rehabilitation, reconstruction and economic development with transformation are unavoidable stages and form a logical sequel to emergency and humanitarian assistance.

Political stability, rehabilitation, reconstruction, development and cooperation and integration within the sub-regional and regional context, are unavoidable stages and form a logical follow up to emergency and humanitarian assistance to member countries, leading to the three continuum strategy: (a) continuum from rehabilitation to reconstruction and development; (b) continuum from national to subregional and regional level; (c) continuum at the national level through decentralization of the development process from national to provincial level with the aim of involving the entire population at the grassroots level (decentralization) and based on genuine needs assessments.

By keeping in sight its responsibility for the promotion of long-term development in larger peace and stability, the United Nations has systematically adjusted its strategy and programmes to focus equal attention on immediate problems requiring urgent action and this is why it has had to rethink its approach. In view of the challenges to be met, the United Nations has developed a three-pronged strategy of post-conflict restoration, maintenance and building of peace. There is no doubt that these fundamental areas will continue to require the attention and concerted efforts of various States, governmental, non-governmental and regional organizations along with the entire United Nations system, with each of the major organs functioning in as balanced and harmonious a manner as prescribed in the Charter.² Africa must make its contribution to this noble task. Africa must participate effectively in the search for an African solution to the singular plague being visited upon us from north to south and from east to west; from the Mediterranean to the CAP, from the Atlantic to the Horn of Africa.

It is indeed difficult to exaggerate the scale of Africa's reconstruction and development needs. In Mozambique for example, the long awaited peace accord between the government and Renamo, strengthened by the Secretary General of the UN, H.E. Boutros Boutros-Ghali visit to Mozambique beginning this year, which brought to an end the war that has ravaged the country for almost two decades, has opened the door to more than two million refugees and more than 5 million internally displaced Mozambicans to return to their homes. They will be joined by over 130,000 demobilized soldiers. This scenario will be valid in different magnitudes for Eritrea, Ethiopia and for Liberia, the Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola, once peace is reestablished and secured. The reintegration of all those people in the agricultural production system will require the provision of seeds, tools, other agriculture implement, livestock, major investment in health, education, shelter, and sanitation. Those economies which have stagnated for years of conflicts and/or wars, cannot generate the financial resources needed for recovery, social and economic develop-

ment, especially when the situation of some of those countries is compounded by recurrent drought. It has been estimated that for Mozambique for example, foreign funding of some US\$ 1.4 bn for the country's Social and Economic Reconstruction Programme, is needed on a yearly basis for the next 3 to 5 years in order to keep a hope for Social and Economic Development.

REHABILITATION, RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT WITH TRANSFORMATION: THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION

For more than fifteen years, Mozambique and the Horn of Africa, and more recently, Angola, Liberia, Rwanda, the Sudan and even Burundi, have endured appalling suffering, with ethnic, tribal, clanic armed conflicts and/or civil wars claiming the lives of millions of Africans. Although some of those wars and conflicts are now over, they have left and are all leaving a legacy of economic decline, huge numbers of displaced people, shattered infrastructures, destruction of food production systems, chronic food shortages and widespread malnutrition, starvation and rampant death. It is estimated now that the obstacles to reconstruction and development are more formidable even than those which faced Germany after the Second World War. But, without reconstruction and development, there is a real danger of conflict resurfacing in the face of growing ethnic, tribal, social and economic tensions. It is therefore vital for the international community to use its resources to help win peace and create a more self-reliant future. Vested interest as well as moral responsibility dictate such course of action, since the alternative is to indefinitely support costly emergency relief operations.

Indeed, humanitarian activities have always built bridges among people and societies. Through such activities was born the Red Cross which remains the symbol of living solidarity when everything else has succumbed to violence.

2 Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*. United Nations, New York, 1992.

Man-made emergencies in Africa resulting from civil wars, corruption, bad governance, etc. call for a determined search for an African solution to African problems. Africa's colonial past prevented Africans from thinking through their problems, and forced them to adopt alien values and systems. Emergencies resulting from desertification, drought, poor rains etc. have also compounded and exacerbated the crisis in Africa. The causes (and even the consequences) of African emergencies are, however, not rooted purely in political development but also in unfolding economic and social conditions. The UN Secretary General Preventive Action can be applied by solving economic and social tensions which are often the root causes of conflicts and civil wars. By being more involved in emergency and humanitarian assistance African would be able to effectively contribute in using the emergency and humanitarian assistance to pave the way for rehabilitation, reconstruction and development with transformation.

Unfortunately, what is noted about these activities and which many perceive on the continent as morally tragic is the absence of a strong, generous and impartial African initiative in the international humanitarian operations being conducted to assist Africa. For lack of an active presence in this area as well, Africa, as an assisted continent, is being marginalized.

The question is how Africa, the land of human kindness *par excellence*, can afford to remain on the sidelines of this vast movement. This is the source from which springs the African humanitarian initiative. Indeed, while external assistance has certainly been substantial and impartial, it has nevertheless always been received in Africa with some apprehension. Then again, emergency relief cannot be continued indefinitely and local African structures will need to be set up at national, sub-regional and regional levels, in order to take over for longer-term development activity.

The fact is that Africa has the manpower it takes to play a significant role in humanitarian operations on the continent and to increase their chances of becoming sustainable development activities. Africa has trained young people who have graduated from universities or technical institutions as

doctors, nurses, engineers and the like but who happen to be under employed in their countries.

First of all, let us take the issue of employing young people in humanitarian operations. While they need experience in order to participate effectively in humanitarian operations beyond their national borders, they also need competence and generosity and these are qualities not lacking in thousands of African youth. They have qualified as doctors, nurses, rural extension workers, engineers and so on, but, some of them have yet to find their feet in the cities of Africa and abroad where they are not always necessarily welcome. Young African men and women who have trained and graduated and are often without employment are seeking to invest their energies in development. They would find in this Initiative, a framework for using their training to best advantage and acting out their personal commitment to development and humanitarian activities.

The other aspect to be highlighted is the use of the capabilities of African armed forces in humanitarian operations. Here is one place indeed where Africa's armies could find a vocation which does them credit and places them in harmony with world opinion instead of the current image they project.

By appropriating an amount of \$US 5 million or more than CFAF 1 billion for emergency relief to Somalia and tying such assistance to the condition for UNICEF, UNESCO and UNHCR to use African NGOs to implement the operation, the African Development Bank has given Africa an exceptional opportunity to rehabilitate its image and help to control its destiny.

Within that framework, the Pan-African Centre for Social Action has, in collaboration with the UNECA, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, the African Development Bank, African Leadership Forum and such African NGOs as those working within the framework of IRED,³ promoted an "African Humanitarian Initiative" that would benefit countries and peoples affected by such disasters as civil strife and famine. The highly positive feedback that was received from these contacts en-

couraged the convening of a colloquium in Ouagadougou from 18 to 20 March 1993 in order to discuss and adopt a plan of action and to take adequate steps for its speedy implementation. The objective to be attained is to make Africa participate actively and effectively in relief operations for Africans. The purpose of the international colloquium was, in addition to creating awareness, specifically to work out an African approach within a plan, a network and structure for expressing solidarity. The theme of the Ouagadougou colloquium therefore addressed serious issues in contemporary Africa which happens to be the continent where development policies and humanitarian intervention should henceforth be combined and harmonized.

The first issue was of interest both to global organization and the whole corpus of international law. Given the extreme distress of certain persons and peoples, this becomes a matter of reconciling respect for State sovereignty with the urgency of humanitarian assistance. Both the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity are quite right in maintaining the principle of equal sovereignty among States. They do affirm, however, each in its own way, that the supreme goal of international society is to serve mankind, first of all by securing the conditions for its survival. And yet, the evidence often indicates that in this area the State is at times both the guarantor of an individual's rights and an obstacle to his free development. This contradiction still has to be resolved.

The second issue concerns the resources that must be appropriated for humanitarian assistance operations. We know the importance that the United Nations Secretary-General attaches to this problem. It was with this in mind that, almost two years ago, he decided to set up a Department of Humanitarian Affairs. By so doing, the Secretary-General hoped to pool the Organization's humanitarian resources and render its humanitarian assistance more effective. Indeed, faced with the misery and distress of people, it is indispensable to be able to intervene at the earliest opportunity. Ethiopia, Eritrea, Burundi, Mozambique and

hopefully soon, Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda, Angola, the Sudan, will not only be facing the task of rehabilitating refugees and displaced people, but having to raise food and agricultural production in the face of massive environmental problems. FAO has been helping in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Mozambique, Burundi, Somalia through its support for country's Food and Agricultural Rehabilitation Programmes. Assistance has been given to farmers and returnee farmers in the form of seeds, agricultural implements such as hoes, spades, sickles and oxen for ploughing. But massive international financial assistance is needed to maintain such programmes and give hope to small rural farmers to rebuild their lands, regain food security based on self-reliance and prevent endless anarchy and hunger. In this connection, the crucial importance of seed availability at the time of planting calls for the establishment of a seed security stock which may involve both local producers and seed importers and requires separate financing.

Sustained poverty reduction in Africa requires a new approach to economic and social development. The starting point of such new approach should not be the adoption of social welfare measures to provide safety nets, but rather a substantial redistribution in favour of small holder farmers and the poor in the rural areas, especially women. There is no doubt that in Africa, as in other developing regions, sustained poverty reduction can be achieved only through measures which enhance the productive capacity of the poor. "Market-based" solutions, currently proposed, are not panacea for poverty, especially when the poor are excluded from markets because they lack access to productive resources. This is why we believe that economic and social development programmes with transformation must make a greater investment in providing credit, marketing infrastructure, and other infrastructural support services targeted at marginal producers and at more remote rural areas. Support to these producers, who account for more than 80 per cent of the majority of Africa's poor, is vital for poverty reduction. There are also wider reasons for a redistributive strategy - not least because

an increase in smallholder productivity will reduce dependency on food imports, thereby saving foreign exchange.

Perhaps, the most fundamental challenge in this field is to break the links between poverty and environmental degradation at source; namely, by enhancing the capacity of the poor to expand their own incomes. This means, in part, increasing and improving their access to land, making more capital available, providing infrastructure, and investing in labour intensive projects, absorbable technologies and training for new skills, in short ensuring the participation of the beneficiaries themselves to all actions affecting their futures.

The African rural poor, many of whom live in environmentally fragile areas, are both the main victims and one of the unwilling architects of soil degradation. Nomadic herders in the Sahel region, increasingly impoverished as a result of drought and the expansion of arable agriculture, have been forced to graze their herds on fragile grasslands. Similarly, staple-food producers working on marginal soils have little choice but to sacrifice the future for the present, clearing trees and mining soils in an unsustainable manner to provide a livelihood. Very often, they are unable to invest in soil and water conservation.

There is no simple formula for reversing Africa's environmental crisis. Nevertheless, the dynamics of environmental degradation are reversible, but only in collaboration with local communities. Development experts have tendency to forget that the best people to speak on behalf of the poor are the poor themselves. Working with the poor requires the establishment of democratic and participative structures at every level, and not just in national institutions. To stand any hope of adoption, environmental conservation methods must cost little or nothing in cash, increase yields, and improve household food security and food self-reliance, by minimizing risk, especially in what the Director-General of FAO calls Low Income Food Deficit Countries (LIFDC). Where there are conservation interventions, they must not conflict with the labour needs of the agriculture cycle and opportunities for, timber, fuel-wood, fodder must exist. There is no sustainability without full participation of the beneficiaries.

Hence, it appears that, of all the challenges facing African Communities, their governments, and the international community in face of the present crisis debilitating the continent, that of ending endemic hunger is the most pressing. Many countries in Africa face exceptional food shortages, and millions of people still face the threat of famine. Even without famine, malnutrition is widespread. According to FAO, more than half of the region's population suffers from some level of food deprivation, with serious consequences for health and productivity. Ending this crisis of food security and food self-sufficiency depend critically on peace, increased self-reliance in food, and redistributive policies aimed at empowering the rural poor, especially women. Ending conflict remains a precondition for food production and food security in countries such as Burundi, Angola, Liberia, Rwanda, the Sudan etc. International Community can play even a far more effective role in this domain.

Many rural people in Africa could be self-sufficient in food if they had greater access to land. Africa could feed itself. Efforts of poor people, especially women, to secure sustainable livelihoods, fundamental rights and access to basic services, should be supported. Basic conditions should exist for millions of refugees and displaced people, especially women to safely return to their lands, to their villages.

Millions of refugees and displaced people are returning to their villages and places of origin, with many more to come. Most of these areas are utterly devastated; access is limited and unsafe due to large amounts of mines laid over years of war and the absence of reliable records. Mines represent a terrible form of delayed warfare. Everywhere, the demining effort, which is so critical for resettlement and reconstruction is progressing somewhat slower than had been anticipated. In Mozambique for example, there are about 2,000,000 mines in the field waiting to explode. The national demining plan needs to be approved expeditiously. And while there has been a significant expansion in the delivery of assistance, further improvement is needed. By and large, the obstacles have been political or administrative in nature. In some cases, financial resources have been lacking or pledges have yet to be converted into dis-

bursements. Therefore, a national mine survey and immediate mine clearance of priority access roads all over the affected countries will make it possible to provide a minimum level of services to those returning and otherwise still-isolated populations - services in agricultural production, health care, water supply, education, and support for communities working to repair their basic economic and social infrastructure. In addition, a national mine awareness programme must be launched quickly to avoid large numbers of mine accidents involving returning populations unfamiliar with the mine threat in their home areas. Finally, in order to eventually remove all of the estimated million mines spread over the affected countries in the region, an indigenous mine clearing capacity must be built up as soon as possible. Training in demining must become part of the UNDP, DHA and other institutions (such as USAID) programmes in close cooperation with other UN Agencies and NGOs.

The actions to be taken on Resolution 48/7 "Assistance in mine clearance" can have several dimensions. First, the task of mine clearance should be seen as an integral part of the UN effort in rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. Although the exact magnitude of the production potential is not at present known, the millions of mines occupying vast agricultural and grazing areas require explicit study and eventual formulation of post-mining development programmes. Second, the issue of financing mine clearing operations is one that can receive receptive ears in private sector, financial, humanitarian and donor institutions. This issue, however, requires careful handling to ensure that duplication of effort does not exist. A comprehensive list should be drawn up of potential donors throughout the continent who can act as our supporting units in financial and other related matters. Third, the military aspect of the task of mine clearing is one that requires expertise. There is limited expertise in Africa in this regard and a serious effort should be made to expand this limited knowledge through training.

It is also of paramount importance and priority to set up and implement early warning systems for both environmental disasters, armed conflicts and civil wars situations.

Facing financial exigency at home and strategic demands abroad (especially from Eastern European Countries) it will definitely be tempting for the governments of the industrial countries (OECD) to overlook the moral and practical case for increasing assistance to Africa. However, the sheer scale of Africa's crisis, the needs of its people and their hopes for the future present a compelling humanitarian case for increased assistance and one which one expects to enjoy widespread public support. More than half of the grants to Africa are spent on conflict-related work, and that proportion is increasing!

There is no doubt that, the sums needed are substantial. But Africa's needs are also enormous and within the means of Northern governments. The abysmally low levels of aid provided by a number of major donors make the case for an increased aid effort even more compelling. In fact, during the Marshall Plan, the United States transferred about 2 per cent of its GNP to Europe, but today its aid budget represents 0.2 per cent of its GNP. Among the OECD countries, only 5 have reached the UN target figure of 0.7 per cent of GNP. According to the World Bank, development aid levels could be doubled by a mere 10 per cent reduction in military expenditure in the industrial countries. It is clear that this may not be a realistic target, but it gives an indication of the scale of resources which could be provided, if there were sufficient political will and political determination, especially after the end of the cold war.

The rehabilitation, rebuilding and development of a country are inconceivable in the absence of security, stability and democratization.

As underlined by the 1993 Human Development Report, the 1980s saw a strong movement away from authoritarian rule towards greater political freedom and democracy. Although this is a positive trend, there is still some way to go in developing African countries as well as in other developing countries, before people are truly in command of their destinies. Even where citizens can elect their leaders in free, regular and fair elections, they seldom have achieved full political participation. If developing countries' citizens are to have an impact on development and social transfor-

mation processes, the trend towards democracy and good governance must widen and deepen.

In African countries especially, the legitimacy to rule were based on the demagoguery promises by governments to establish order and promote economic growth and development with structural and social transformation. When these promises faltered, their legitimacy was undermined and even where governments have obtained some success in alleviating poverty, as in China and the Republic of Korea, people sooner or later want greater democracy, accountability and good governance. Attempts have often been made from outside to promote and/or encourage democracy, e.i. by making aid conditional on democratic reforms. This is often an expression of shared concern for universal human rights and is highly welcome; nevertheless, if not properly worked out, it can be counter-productive, as it might not produce lasting change and can also antagonize people unnecessarily and even undermine those pressing for democratic change. Democracy is definitely not a matter of one decision or of hastily organized elections. Democracy and good governance require a long political development process. Considering the immense diversity of possible political forms, it is unlikely that the demands of outsiders will correspond to another country's real and genuine needs. The democratic process chosen by people who have to determine their own destiny, has to be adapted to local circumstances. Whatever formal structure a country opts for, is only the starting point in a long process of facilitating effective forms of popular participation and avoiding destructive ethnic and tribal conflicts, civil wars.

Democracy and good governance usually bring their own problems. An immediate difficulty is managing competing claims of different classes, ethnic groups and political actors. The central problem for many developing countries is that they lack strong democratic institutions. In the absence of democratic structures, local governments lack an effective political power base from which to generate local control over decision-making. Democracies and good governance need much more than voting booths to work efficiently. They also need stable political parties that can themselves draw together many diverse interests and weave

them into a cohesive organization. They need independent groups: farmers' organizations, trade unions, consumer groups, chambers of commerce, cultural and religious groups - and all the other elements of a civil society that systematically facilitate and regulate the process of articulating citizens' demands. Building these institutions takes time and constant renewal, if they are not to become instruments for a small elite to manipulate the levers of power. There are also dangers from the creation of new forms of central control. Many African countries are going through two difficult processes simultaneously: democratization, good governance and economic liberalization, which is straining the political capacities of many newly elected leaders. In many countries, it has therefore been found necessary to complement democratization with efforts aimed at enhanced transparency and accountability of government. After gaining independence, many African countries have initially emphasized efforts to build a nation-State. This has often had a highly centralizing effect. External assistance, which in many countries forms a large part of the national budget, has only helped to reinforce these trends. Decentralizing governance, from capital cities to regions, towns and villages, can be one of the best means of promoting participation and efficiency.

A move to decentralization, not only affects the way resources are spent, it also affects the way money can be collected. It could, for example, allow more taxes to be raised locally if people are confident that their money will be used for the benefit of their own communities. The main ways of increasing local revenue are through taxation, cost recovery, voluntary contributions and borrowing. Regarding user charges, our experiences seem to cover what was stated in the 1991 Human Development Report, namely that some services should always be free: specifically primary health care (though there could, in some cases, be charges for drugs and hospital care) and basic education and even for secondary education. For water and sanitation, governments should bear the capital costs but users might contribute to recurrent costs. One of the most important benefits of decentralization is the opportunity to cut costs, in several ways. First, if local people feel that it is their money being spent, they are likely to keep a tighter lid on

expenditure and to use resources more efficiently. In theory, decentralization and participation should improve efficiency and sustainability. At the outset, projects would be better able to match local needs. And with projects monitored locally, lines of communication should be shorter, with fewer delays due to conflicts between project staff and the final beneficiaries. Involving local people can also result in a more appropriate structure of services, particularly in health care. Local involvement also or full participation of beneficiaries, opens up the opportunity for people to add voluntary contributions to amplify a programme or project's impact and to guarantee sustainability. Some of the most effective contributions as a result of decentralization come from local labour and materials. A final and lasting benefit of greater participation in the provision of local services is that they can be more efficiently run, maintained and sustained.

CONCLUSION

The task of building a better world, while often reconciling divergent interests of Member States, is complicated by the very fact that the world is changing rapidly. Considered in physical terms alone, the capacity of the world to feed its people with limited resources is seriously compromised. In terms of technology, the rapid advance of science and technology has, in spite of its promise to enhance world development, yet to be properly exploited for the benefit of poor nations. In political terms, the bipolarity which characterized the geopolitics of the world has, with the crumbling of the ideological walls within which the Cold War thrived, given way to multi-polarity. While the rich nations seem to be well prepared for the "new world order", many developing nations have yet to become equal partners in the new deal since they lack the material resources for making the required adjustments, becoming competitive and tackling their well-known social and economic problems. What is even more serious is that some of these countries, particularly in Africa, are being ravaged by ethnic and tribal conflicts, civil wars and natural disasters.

Sadly, turbulence and conflict seem to be the order of the day in many parts of the world. We are now seeing a great number of conflagrations erupt inside countries.

Civil wars are taking a tremendous tragic toll. They rage, often seemingly without end, and cause such hatred and bitterness that conflict resolution becomes, for some time, almost impossible. Cessation of hostilities requires magnanimity, courage and innovativeness. And reconciliation requires forgiveness, tolerance and foresight.

In Africa, no one can say when these problems created by natural or man-made disasters will be solved. Displaced people might remain for months, if not years, in the settlement areas.

The transition from emergency and humanitarian assistance to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development with transformation, furthermore calls for a carefully graduated plan to progressively normalize the supply of agricultural inputs. Seeds and tools are factors of production which should be obtained by farmers at cost, once acute food scarcities have been eliminated. In the past, as a consequence of war and drought, these inputs have been supplied free of charge to a large extent. This has helped to shape prevailing attitudes and expectations, and an adjustment period of up to 2-3 years may be necessary in order to revert to a more normal state of affairs. The transition can be accomplished through diminishing subsidies, credit arrangements, appropriate solution to land tenure issue, or a mixture of both. Balance of payments support programmes can also be used to finance these imports on a commercial basis.

Thus, while long-term policy is clearly in support of rehabilitation, reconstruction and development programmes, the coming years' preoccupation with returnees and internally displaced, as well as with the aftermath of the drought (in some places compounding the refugees and returnees problems), means that there is still a need for emergency and relief distributions of food and non-food items.

However, it is not possible to disregard the dependence on outside aid that has been brought on by so many years of emergency and humanitarian assistance. This will necessitate a sensitive and pragmatic approach to food aid. On the one hand, situations may arise where free food distributions would directly undermine the recov-

ery of agricultural production; on the other, it is difficult to contemplate substantially reduced aid levels without agricultural recovery having in fact taken place. As a first step, to promote a change in attitude, many Governments favour a maximization of food-for-work where emergency assistance is needed. This policy should as far as possible be supported by the implementing agencies.

For example, the Declaration on the Guiding Principles for Humanitarian Assistance, adopted by the Government of Mozambique and Renamo in July 1992 was drawn up to ensure that all humanitarian assistance is provided in a fair manner to all population groups in need, no matter where they reside. This declaration was adopted as an integral part of the peace agreement.

Although some natural disasters such as earthquakes, cyclones, etc. cannot be prevented, others such as drought, famine, poverty, armed conflicts and civil wars can be prevented. Since 1945, the international community has concentrated enormous amount of resources and time on "patched solutions" to armed conflicts and disasters. It is now time to focus UN and global resources and energy on prevention through early warning systems, preventive diplomacy, mediation, active peace building and rehabilitation, reconstruction and development with transformation as the lasting solutions to armed conflicts, civil wars and preventable natural disasters which are devastating the continent. The UN system, Regional organizations, Governments and NGOs have the potential to mobilize such preventive action i.e. by analyzing, identifying and presenting potential conflictual and contentious situations to appropriate media-

tor (UN system, OAU, regional organizations, national institutions, etc.) depending on the case. This is what is also stated in the United Nations Secretary General's "Agenda for Peace".

The breaking down of barriers erected during decades of turbulence and isolation is a time-consuming process. The advances made in the implementation of the peace agreement, in the political arena and in the humanitarian field, as well as in democratic process and decentralization, reinforce each other in building mutual confidence. By the same token, failure to move forward with all these components can seriously compromise the prospects for success and the chances of firming up links with national rehabilitation, reconstruction and future development with transformation which appear as the logic sequel to emergency and humanitarian assistance, and as the ultimate solution to conflicts, civil wars and natural disasters devastating and debilitating the African Continent.

There is no doubt that the proliferation of deadly and debilitating armed conflicts and civil wars in Africa are just the tip of the iceberg representing deep-rooted problems facing the continent. Opportunities to change the economic, political (democratic) and social fabrics of African countries must emerge in face of this great danger and upheaval. Will Africa make the best out of the situation? It is very much to be hoped that it does, for this is its last chance. In one African country, it is often said that, when the night is at its deepest, the day is very near. This may well be a pipe-dream and, if so, it is too good to want to wake up. But if it is reality, then it is too good to want to go to sleep.

IMPLICATIONS OF AGRICULTURAL REFORM FOR THE ALLEVIATION OF RURAL POVERTY IN AFRICA¹

by Y. Tekolla²

I. AFRICAN AGRICULTURE AND THE FATE OF THE RURAL POOR

1.1 Synoptic view of the agriculture sector

Laconically stated, a popular African adage has this to say, "*until the lions have their historians, tales of hunting will always glorify the hunter*".¹ The world shelters about 157 billionaires and perhaps 2 million millionaires, but close to 300 million souls languish in an abject poverty with some of them living on sidewalks, under bridges or in dilapidated makeshift houses and scavenging for crumbs from garbage dumps. Ironically, most of these are in Africa, a naturally rich continent, but perpetually poor. Yet rarely, if ever, the poor manage to find reliable historians committed to their cause.

The contention that the agriculture sector is among the major culprits for this pathetic situation is neither rethorical nor polemical. True, contrary to current thinking, even sub-Saharan Africa has maintained trend growth rates in agricultural production comparable to other regions of the world.² Over the years 1981-1992, aggregate production increased at an annual rate of 3 per cent with slight declines in 1982, 1986 and 1990. Nonetheless, the reverse is true in per caput terms as portrayed in figure 1.

The global picture of food production for the region as a whole in per caput terms is even more daunting. It commenced the last decade with an index of 97.7 and trended

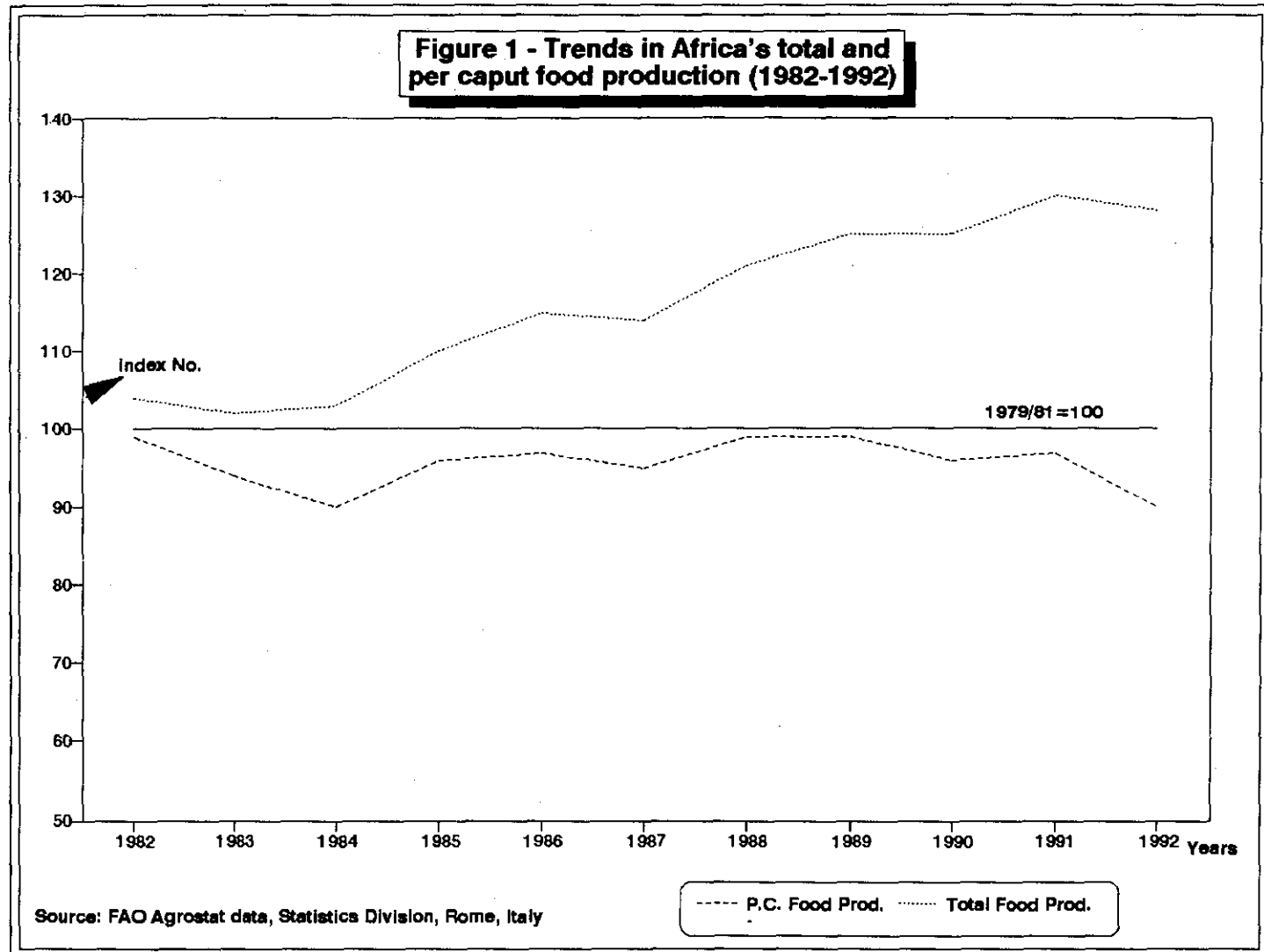
downwards in the ensuing two years. By 1986, it had reached 97.2 and has since stagnated with the situation deteriorating in 1992 after which it hit a trough of 91.2. The level of production in 1992 showed little or no improvement. The estimated cereal harvest in 1993, for instance, was 95.8 million tons. This was lower than that of the year 1991 by 3.1 million tons.³

The inevitable consequence of this trend is the inability on the part of the region to attain its objectives of food self-sufficiency and food security. The cereal self-sufficiency ratio for sub-Saharan Africa was 97 in the years 1969/1971. In less than two decades, this figure plummeted to 86 thus multiplying the food insecure people in the region. As far back as 1992, the number of malnourished people was estimated at 168 million⁴ with a preponderant segment of these being old men, women and children.

The factors behind the poor performance of the agriculture sector are varied and numerous. These encompass rising population, scarcity and/or mismanagement of resources, inadequate research and extension services, inappropriate technology, limited agricultural credit, weak agricultural marketing, poor technical capabilities, ineffective agricultural policy and planning strategies, deficient managerial practices, political instabilities, armed conflicts and environmental degradation including drought and desertification. Four-fifths of the pasture and crop land in sub-Saharan Africa is totally degraded.⁵

1 Text of document prepared for presentation at the Advisory Committee meeting on mobilization of domestic resources, agricultural reform and self-evaluation of good governance convened by the Global Coalition for Africa in Harare, Zimbabwe, from 1-3 June 1994.

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1.2 The plight of the rural poor

Poverty, like beauty, depends on the eyes of the beholder. In other words, it is largely a matter of relativity and difficult to define at a given point in time and without a common frame of reference. For instance, X may be poor in relation to Y or Z. In addition, the status of X may change in period t compared to period n. This is precisely the reason why it is virtually impossible to provide a clear-cut definition of poverty. Notwithstanding this, some attempts have been made in the past to offer broad definitions. According to UNESCO, poverty is perceived as "the relative absence of income, assets, basic services, self-respect, opportunities for education and social mobility and participation in decision-making".⁶

If one were to employ these elements as a barometer to gauge situations in Africa, one would find that practically 50 per cent of the region's population is poor. In 1990, sub-Saharan Africa alone had a poverty-stricken population of 216 million.⁷ Despite growing urbanization and escalating urban poverty, almost four-fifths of those wallowing in absolute poverty live in rural areas. They constitute marginal farmers, especially women, tenants, share croppers and landless agricultural labourers. The proportion of the region's population experiencing problems of landlessness in one form or another is estimated at 40 per cent.

The plight of the rural poor is increasingly problematic. The calculus of their survival hinges basically on three variables. These are the price of food, the availability of work and the wages offered to them. To these must be added access by them to resources including factors of production not to mention support services like marketing, research, extension and training. It is the lack or inadequacy of all these that has imperilled the survival of the rural poor. In most sub-Saharan African countries, the lower-echelon 40 per cent of the population receive only 15 per cent or less of the total income.

The exacerbated ordeal of poverty in rural areas has had rippling spill-over effects on the overall socio-economic and political life of the region's population. The first of these is witnessed in rising rural-urban exo-

us, which has its roots in the apparent failure of African countries to make a dent on rural poverty. The urban population in the region stands at about 320 million presently. This is equivalent to the region's total population in 1965. Had effective measures been taken to assuage rural poverty earlier, the mammoth proportion of the region's population now living in urban areas would have been reduced significantly thus minimizing needless economic chaos and political conflicts menacing various African countries today.

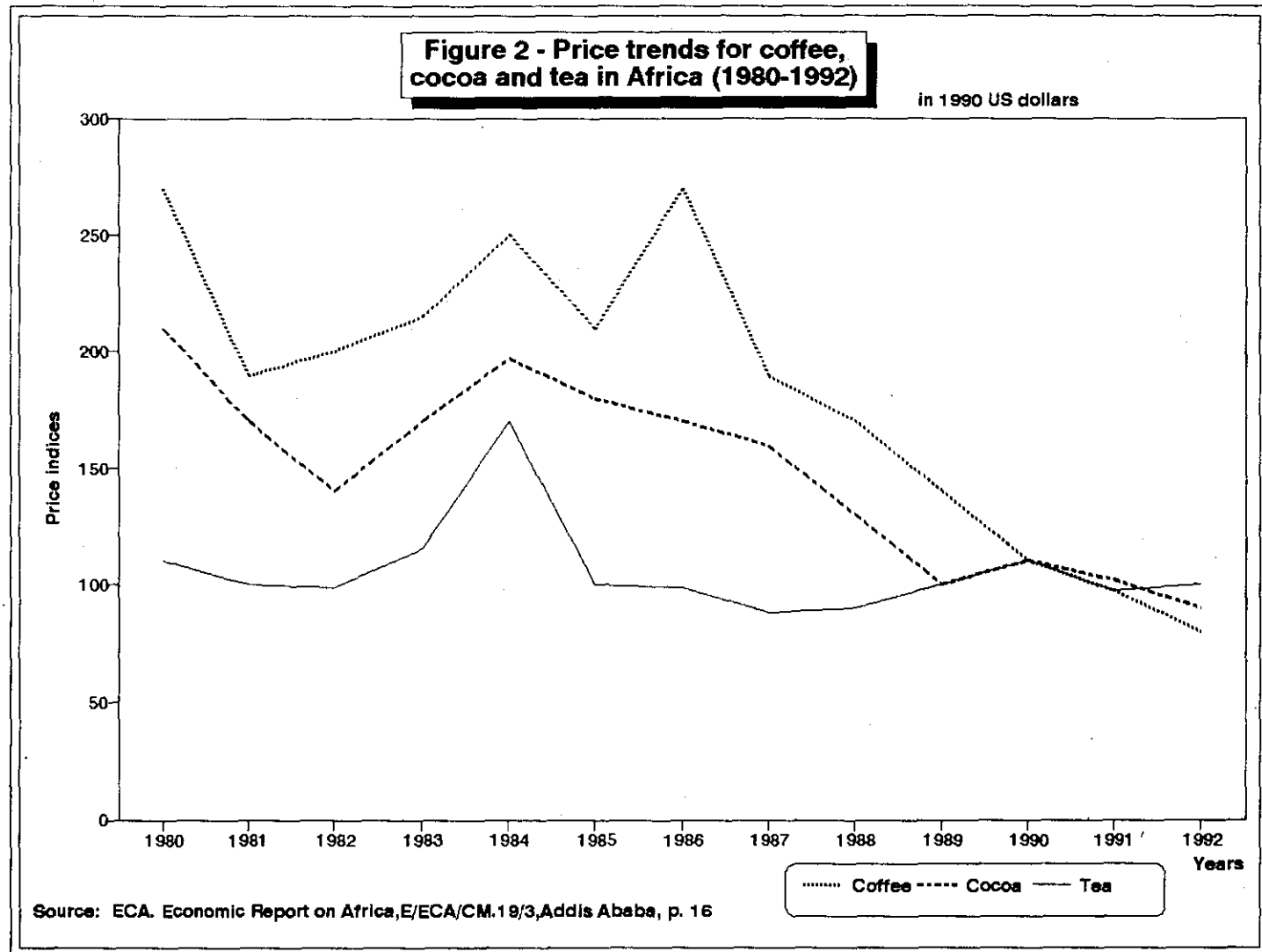
The other effect equally detrimental to the region is the degradation of its environment. In the absence of other alternatives, the rural poor have no choice, but to eke out a living by exploiting the physical resources around them such as forests, water and land. All down the centuries, the rural poor have drawn upon a resource base far larger than their own areas. They gather fruits, nuts, fish, game, roots, leaves, fibres, reeds, dung and wood. These activities, difficult as they are, wreak havoc to the environment thus rendering the plight of the poor even more problematic. The land under forest cover in Ethiopia until some years ago was close to 40 per cent. This has now flagged to an abysmally low level of 2-3 per cent.

II. IMPLICATIONS OF REFORMS FOR THE ALLEVIATION OF RURAL POVERTY

2.1 Domains of reforms in the sector

The pangs of grinding rural poverty, coupled with the overall socio-economic malaise gnawing at the countries of the region, have led many of them to embark upon a variety of reform measures congruent with the prescriptions of the Bretton Woods institutions. Practically, two-thirds of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa have launched some reform programmes.⁸ The broad objectives of these are⁹:

- (a) pruning the size of the public sector and improving its management;
- (b) elimination of price distortions;
- (c) increasing trade liberalization; and



(d) enhancement of domestic savings in both private and public sectors.

As far as the agriculture sector is concerned, a certain amount of specific reform measures with anti-poverty elements have also been initiated. These have been strengthened by the World Bank sector-based loan programme known as SECAL. Typical reform measures embarked upon in the sector encompass privatization of agricultural production; liberalization of agricultural produce and input marketing; a phased withdrawal of the state from agricultural activities; intensification of actions geared at environmental protection; decentralization of decision-making; promotion of grass-roots participation in agricultural programmes; and maintenance of regional balance in agricultural development. In Zaire, the production and sale of principal export crops (the prices of which keep falling on international markets as shown in figure 2) is largely left to private initiatives.

In executing the reform measures, the countries apply a variety of policy instruments. According to AAF-SAP,¹⁰ the instruments commonly employed are exchange rate adjustment through mainly devaluation; interest rates for promoting domestic savings and for allocating resources; controlling money supply and credit; fiscal policy aimed at reducing government expenditure and deficit financing; liberalization of trade and payments; and deregulation of goods, services and inputs.

The reform strategies under implementation in the countries reflect some ingredients of these instruments. In the Sudan, taxes were slashed by one-half (May 1993) in order to reduce food prices. In the 14 CFA franc zone countries, a currency devaluation of 50 per cent was introduced in January 1994. In Zimbabwe, subsidies on roller maize was removed (June 1993). In some other countries like Libya and Algeria, the idea of applying these instruments has either been frowned upon or accepted with a cautious optimism for fear that it will entail negative consequences such as bread riots.

2.2 Impact of reforms on the alleviation of rural poverty

Patently, the reform measures under implementation in Africa have had both negative and positive consequences. In Sao Tomé and Príncipe, the management of some state farms in the public sector is said to have improved substantially. In Nigeria, the dismantling of federal marketing boards and the liberalization of agricultural trade have made positive contributions to the recovery of export-oriented agriculture.¹¹

This is one side of the picture. In other countries, the consequences of the reform measures have been devastating. The devaluation introduced in the CFA franc zone last January has intensified illegal trade in agricultural commodities between the CFA and non-CFA countries such as Senegal and the Gambia. The on-going reforms in Côte d'Ivoire's civil service is likely to make about 4,000 people jobless at the Ministry of Agriculture.

In so far as the rural poor are concerned, the negative consequences have been even more pronounced. In those countries where reform measures have been draconian, prices of basic essentials such as food and agricultural inputs have skyrocketed. Moreover, the expanding privatization of the sector has opened up opportunities for affluent people to push the rural poor aside and exploit available resources including fertile land, water and forests. Under such trying conditions, the poor have no alternative, but to move to unfertile, marginal lands or migrate to urban centres thus rendering poverty a troubling paradox with no concrete panacea in sight.

The problems do not end here. Since the principal objective of reforms is to reduce government expenditure and balance the books in the current account, there is a propensity on the part of some countries to export even food commodities, while there is a mounting demand for these at home. This exacerbates the food situation facing the rural poor and makes it difficult for them to have access to basic services like education, health, research, extension and marketing. What makes the matter worse is that, apart from the shortage of resources to provide the services, the fact that these are inherently structured to cater

for the needs of the wealthy adds another dimension to the problems of the rural poor.

To those segments of the rural poor having no land to cultivate, the difficulties are robust. Invariably, most of them may not have gainful employment opportunities under the present circumstances. With the precipitous or phased disengagement of the state from development activities and the sluggish takeover of these by the unprepared, profit-oriented private sector, employment opportunities for the rural poor is woefully limited. The situation is not any better in the informal sector either for the simple reason that the rural poor do not possess the requisite skills. The lucky few who manage to find employment in rural or urban areas may still lead a wretched life as they are required to spend the lion's share of their meagre income on basic necessities particularly food, the prices of which tend to shoot up from day to day.

The inegalitarian socio-economic system thriving on market-based reform measures has also grave implications for the moral and psychic welfare of the rural poor. It deprives them of the respect and dignity which they are entitled to as human beings. In other terms, the very fact that they do not wield adequate economic power (land, labour, capital, etc.) relegates them to a position of neglect, humiliation and deprivation, which impedes their effective participation in vital decisions affecting the development of their community of which they are a major component.

III. REFORM APPROACHES TO THE ALLEVIATION OF RURAL POVERTY

3.1 The International climate

An effective assault on rural poverty is contingent upon as much on the introduction and execution of appropriate reforms in the international climate as it does on that in the national setting. In the words of Richard Sandbrook, it calls for a restructuring of both the world economy and domestic development strategies.¹² Implementing programmes seeking to alleviate rural poverty at local and national levels will come to naught without complementary reforms at the international level.

When one considers the international climate as a factor in the alleviation of rural poverty, the first thing that shoots to one's mind is international trade. There are several ways in which the current practices in international trade affect the rural poor. These may be viewed in the context of declining commodity prices, rising walls of protectionism, mounting debts, exchange rate fluctuations and interest rates. Each of these variables has far-reaching implications for agricultural production, distribution, consumption and institutions.

African countries engaged in international trade find themselves in an atmosphere where a rising number of regional economic blocs are being erected in both the developed and developing world. Included in these are the Single European Market, the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) linking the United States of America, Canada and Mexico as well as the Asia Pacific Regional Economic Organization, which seems now to be going through an agonizing period of parturition. In the final analysis, the objective of these groupings is to maximize their benefits from prevailing trade relations.

They are structurally designed to protect the economic interests of their regions through the instrumentality of discriminatory trade practices like tariff and non-tariff barriers, including producers price support schemes, quota systems, voluntary export restraints and the utilization of synthetic materials as substitutes for primary commodities normally imported from African countries. Shrinking export earnings from export commodities are not the only hurdles to the alleviation of rural poverty. The unreformed international trade and aid policies governing consumable commodities such as food and agricultural inputs produced outside Africa constitute severe impediments.

Agricultural commodities imported by African countries are either subsidized as in the case of rice and wheat or highly priced as in the case of agricultural inputs (fertilizers, pesticides, vaccines, tractors, etc.). This has discouraged local production and pushed up the level of the countries' indebtedness. As a result, the region's debt/export ratio jumped from 327.5 per cent in 1991 to 377.5 per cent in 1992 while its

debt service/export ratio leaped from 30.1 per cent to 35.0 per cent over the same period.¹³ The region's debt was US\$ 48 billion in 1980. In less than a decade and a half, it escalated to a height of about US\$ 280 billion.

International aid policies have not always been tailored to the needs of the rural poor in terms of volume, value and focus. Official Development Assistance (ODA) should, for the most part, have been extended to African countries either in free grants or in low interest rates. Yet by 1980, ODA became increasingly characterized by commercial lending with the grant component gradually dwindling thus aggravating the debt situation. The level of ODA extended to African countries expressed as a proportion of GNP of donor countries has decreased over the years. The flow of ODA to sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, has shown a downward trend. Net disbursements sank from US\$ 11.5 billion in 1990 to US\$ 10.5 billion in 1991 in real terms.¹⁴ Total multilateral net disbursements did not exceed US\$ 6 billion during the same period.

The region's swelling debt burden, its contracting export earnings, its limited capacity to mobilize domestic savings and the declining flow of external resources have frustrated measures designed to mitigate rural poverty. It is with these in perspective that efforts have been made to prepare the soil for the establishment of the African Economic community and to involve African countries in Uruguay Round negotiations on agricultural reforms in the context of GATT. Despite this, the international climate remains still light years away from any meaningful reforms.

3.2 Self-reliance and capacity-building

Available evidence suggests that the international climate, in its present shape, has very little to offer in the spheres of reform measures geared to the alleviation of rural poverty. The alternative open to African countries is, therefore, to strengthen their capacity to foster self-reliance. A *sine qua non* for self-reliance constitutes a greater potential for trade; improvements in terms of trade; a lessening of dependence on external markets, capital

and technologies; and re-orientation of development assistance.

A major facet of self-reliance is the reinforcement of inter and intra-regional cooperation in socio-economic development with a particular focus on the agriculture sector on which the rural poor depend for survival. Way back in 1980, self-reliance was stated as a cardinal objective in the Lagos Plan of Action and the efforts being made to establish the African Economic Community are glaring manifestations of that concern. The treaty providing for the creation of the Community has already been ratified by 35 member countries.

At subregional levels, encouraging measures have been taken to pave the way for the promotion of pan-African cooperation. Institutions like the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA), which is becoming the Common Market of the Eastern and Southern African countries (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and many others are instruments employed to accelerate the required inter-state cooperation. The principal domains of cooperation embrace food security, research, environment, farm management, livestock husbandry, disease control, and exploitation of fisheries resources.

These institutions, important as they are, have not been entirely successful in combating rural poverty. Some of the reasons for this are the low level of inter-country trade (6-7 per cent), inconvertible currencies, licensing regulations and locally enforced tariff barriers. The unbridled expansion of cross-border trade and the lack of coordination within and among the institutions have also been severe obstructions to their effectiveness. On top of this, they lack practical mechanisms for harmonizing their policies; for developing memoranda of understanding, protocols and treaties, and for funding regional activities. Very few, if any, of these institutions have been subjected to the types of reforms which national public-sector institutions have gone through and are, as such, ill-adapted to the alleviation of rural poverty.

Another vehicle for self-reliance is the building-up of indigenous capacities in fields like rural development including small-scale irrigation schemes, farm management, rural storage, drought control, environmental protection, disaster prevention, pest infestation and the management of related institutions. Agricultural research, extension, credit, training and project monitoring and evaluation are also pivotal areas calling for capacity building. The countries' educational and training policies or programmes in many of these fields do not appear to be consistent with the requirements of the rural poor. More resources are spent on university education compared to primary education, which are believed to bring greater benefits to the rural poor. In sub-Saharan Africa, the resources spent on a college student for four years can finance the education of 35 rural children for six years.¹⁵

Further, the programmes and policies are tilted towards the rich in their content and coverage. Most of them prepare students for white collar jobs or produce armchair academicians with little or no orientation to field-based, practical activities. Inequities are also observed in the siting of educational and training institutions. More of these institutions are located in urban areas than they are in the localities inhabited by the rural poor. Women, who are an overwhelming segment of the rural poor, do not have opportunities for education on equal footings with men. Moreover, they do not have easy access to land, and opportunities to use their whole potentials.

A few countries have attempted to reform their educational and training systems in such a way as to make them consonant with the needs of the rural poor. In Morocco, the government's medium- and long-term policy objectives have been designed to reorient primary education to the entire school-age children including those in rural areas. In Tunisia, the first objective of the government's educational programme is to bring about in the sector equity, cost-effectiveness and consistency with the development goal of its people at the grass-roots level. Whatever the scale on which measures have been taken in some African countries to reform the educational and training systems, the fact remains that these still trail behind the needs of the rural poor and

continue to depend largely on foreign expertise for capacity-building in pertinent fields.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The hypothesis that agricultural reforms, if properly designed and implemented, are useful factors to reckon with in rural poverty alleviation in Africa, is not open to controversy. All the same, the genuine rationale underpinning the on-going reforms in the region is such that they tend to be oriented primarily to the mitigation of the region's balance-of-payments problems.

Almost all the reform measures stated earlier are intended to bring about improvements in the agriculture sector with a particular accent on trade liberalization, public sector management, privatization of production and crop diversification. The ultimate objective is thus to help the countries of the region expand export revenue, reduce budgetary deficits and pay back their debts. In words, the reforms have had little or no equity dimensions *per se*.

These equity desiderata apparent in the reform measures have been a matter of grave concern not only to individual African countries, but also to the Bretton Woods institutions, donor countries and organizations in the UN System such as UNICEF and ECA. UNICEF and ECA have been among the first few institutions which have alerted the attention of the international community to the negative impact of agricultural reforms on the socio-economic welfare of the poverty-ridden people in reforming countries. In fact, the alternative reform strategies discussed under AAF-SAP referred to above have been devised to serve this purpose.

The apprehension expressed in AAF-SAP has also been acknowledged by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The World Bank has already launched an anti-poverty programme for some African countries and the share of its lending for human resources development focusing on health, education and nutrition surged from 5 per cent in 1981/1983 to 14 per cent in 1990/1992.¹⁶ Following the devaluation introduced in CFA franc zone countries at the beginning of this year,

France set up a special development fund of Fr 300 million, which would provide support to the poor hardest hit by increased cost of living.¹⁷

As impliedly indicated above, a good number of African countries have now realized more than ever before the impact of reforms (which are nevertheless a necessity) and the implications of these for rural poverty. Some of them have started implementing the reforms more or less in conformity with the prescriptions laid down by the IMF and the World Bank. This is particularly true of the sector's privatization. Examples of countries which have launched a comprehensive programme of privatizing the sector are Ghana, Guinea, Mozambique, Nigeria and Senegal. Others have initiated the reforms on a hit-and-run basis. Few of these have relatively advanced further and the rest have travelled a little bit and come back to square one. Countries in this category are Chad, Kenya, Malawi and Rwanda.

On balance, the probability of having on the drawing board agricultural reforms embodying the concerns of the rural poor is now reasonably higher than what it was at the beginning of the 1980s, when most countries commenced to implement agricultural reforms in the context of the World Bank/IMF-led structural adjustment programmes. This does not mean, however, that the reforms embarked upon have been well chiselled to suit the requirements of the rural poor. A lot more needs to be done.

If African countries and the international community are seriously committed to the alleviation of rural poverty in the context of the ongoing agricultural reform programmes, they need to diagnose the re-

quirements of the rural poor and design their reform programmes accordingly. Some of the critical areas in the sector to which particular attention should be paid for reform purposes are agricultural marketing institutions including rural-based cooperatives; agricultural development banks; rural credit schemes; input distribution; research and extension services; as well as monetary and fiscal policies along with currency devaluation, taxation, subsidies and wage structures. Other equally important domains are land holding systems, food production specially root crops, environmental protection, infrastructure such as roads, water, electricity, disaster prevention, price structures, international trade, income distribution and education and training. The programmes and policies of inter-governmental organizations must also be reviewed together with the countries' political value systems. In all these domains, special emphasis should be placed on the role of women since they form an integral part of the rural poor.

Finally, it should be stressed that the current tendency of pushing African countries to intensify reforms in return for debt relief or special financial assistance of the types referred to earlier for the principal purpose of balancing the books in the current account cannot be a reliable cure to the widening problems of rural poverty. This does not guarantee that the financial gains accruing to the reforming countries through debt relief or external assistance will be judiciously utilized to improve the lamentable fate of the rural poor. After all, the "mere provision of finance without prior removal of the structural impediments that influence its outcome is like using a straw for a battering ram. The gate will not yield, but the straw gets broken..."¹⁸

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