



Food crisis: are donors doing the right thing

The context:

- The recent food crisis has added nearly 100 million to the ranks of the estimated 855 million poor and the hungry in the world.
- Among these poor and the hungry, nearly 80 per cent are small-scale or near-landless farmers (50 per cent with inadequate land, 20 per cent rural landless workers, and 10 per cent fishers and herders); the rest which comprise 20 per cent are the urban poor whose number is now growing.
- The most affected and vulnerable within this marginalized group are the women.
- The current financial crisis will further impoverish these small food producers and marginalized communities and deepen the food crisis.
- Ironically, these small food producers are hungry not because there is not enough food produced but because they do not have enough land and access to productive resources to produce their own food or enough income and money to buy food from the market.



More ODA for food and agriculture

- The majority of the poor and hungry about 80 percent live in the rural areas and are engaged in agriculture and related activities. That's why; if we are to achieve the MDG goals and prioritise poverty alleviation then we must emphasis and focus on agriculture and rural development. And yet in real terms, ODA commitments to agriculture and rural development fell by nearly half in the last one decade. The support for rural development and food and agriculture need to be increased.

1. Models of agriculture

- “Modern” chemical-based monocrop agricultural systems (promoted by the Green Revolution since the 1960’s) are not only unsustainable but have destroyed the natural resource base of agriculture and biodiversity, displaced small-scale and marginal farmers and have created economic and social inequalities. Looking at “technological fixes” such as genetically engineered crops and nerica rice varieties are not the solution.. Hunger needs to be addressed at the political level, and social and economic levels.
- Public-private partnerships should not focus on the promotion of high chemical based monocropping systems but more sustainable solutions.
- Within this is the question of the Accountability of the CGIAR system and the IARC.
- **What is needed is the *Promotion and support for biodiversity-based ecological food production*. This holistic system that is based on local knowledge, conserving natural resources and the environment.**

2. Implement genuine agrarian, fisheries, forestry and pasture land reform.

- With a large section of the rural population without land the world over, comprehensive agrarian reforms to redistribute land are necessary. By providing social equity and a stimulant to farmers to produce more on their own land, this would increase rural income and reduce poverty.
- Effective access of fisherfolk communities, indigenous peoples and pastoralists to marine, forestry and pastureland resources respectively is also a key component. It also includes access to productive resources.
- Genuine agrarian, fisheries, forest and pastoral reform have to ensure that women own land and have access to the productive resources.

3. Ensure fair price for farm produce

While food production and other costs have rapidly increased over the years, prices for farmers' produce have remained relatively stagnant or have increased only marginally. There is an in-built bias in farm pricing in favour of industries and urban consumers, which has led to a steady decline in small-scale farmers' income. Being under constant financial pressure, these farmers are exploited by middlemen and traders.

People's Food Sovereignty should be the framework for food production and distribution and for national and international trade and investment policy

- Democratic ownership of national development agenda including food and agriculture policies and development, cannot be realized without the participation of small food producers and of rural women at all levels. Accra Agenda for Action commits to open and inclusive dialogue on development policies that includes CSOs and parliamentarians.
- Embodying democratic ownership and genuine participation in food and agriculture is the concept of food sovereignty which is defined as the people and communities fundamental right to determine their food and agricultural policies. Includes right to food, ecological agriculture and gender justice.

Gender equality is invisible in donor accountability

- *Poverty is feminized phenomenon with women making 70percent of poor.*
- Donors have impressive policies but
- Women's voices and perspective missing in national and international levels in development policies.
- Donors only now have begun to provide documentation to track trends in gender equality focused aid
- Women's CSOs are recommending to target 10 percent of ODA for gender equality and women's empowerment by 2010 and 20 percent by 2015.
- Food production and consumption should be more equitable and beneficial for women and girls.