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1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa is unlikely to feature at the top of the agenda at any international dialogue on food security. The country is a net exporter of agricultural commodities and has a high per capita income, even for an emerging economy. There are no tight foreign-exchange constraints, and the country is not landlocked. The innovative constitution entrenches the right to adequate nutrition, and this is the basis of the national Integrated Food Security Strategy (IFSS). Taking these features into account, one could easily conclude that food ought to be available and accessible in South Africa at all times. But is this conclusion correct? The confusing reality is that despite all the favourable indicators and South Africa's national "food-secure" status, about 14 per cent of the population is estimated to be vulnerable to food insecurity, and 25 per cent of children under the age of six are reckoned to have had their development stunted by malnutrition (HSRC, 2004).

Against this backdrop of contradictions between positive macro trends and indicators and the challenging reality on the ground, the IFSS should be explored further in order to deepen our understanding of policy directions and priorities on food security. The analysis in this report leads to an overall conclusion that the IFSS is an excellent strategy on paper and a relevant framework for different stakeholders, but in reality it lacks implementing power and is therefore not used to its full potential.

2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW IN RELATION TO FOOD SECURITY

South Africa presents a unique and important case for understanding food-security policies. The colonial government of South Africa established the Native Affairs Department (NAD) in 1926 and embarked on a process of state paternalism. The NAD was tasked with overseeing the African reserves, and therefore with intervening in rural crises such as hunger and famine (Herbst, 1930). Some argue that the development of the NAD was the colonial state's attempt to interconnect free-market principles with the aims of providing relief to and uplifting black people. South Africa had three official famines during the period 1912–1946, and the official relief provided by the NAD embodied mechanisms of international and domestic trade in the supply of food for vulnerable areas. The NAD's desire to uphold free-market principles influenced its decision to refrain from providing relief in other situations. There were strong nested beliefs within the NAD that "being perceived as philanthropists would seemingly

* The author would like to express her appreciation for the valuable input gained during the food security round table in August 2010. Our mutual respect for a free and honest discussion facilitated fruitful sharing of experiences between participants. A special thank you to Mr. Koos van Zyl for sharing his insightful institutional memory and opinions on food-security-related issues in South Africa. *Josee Koch is an independent consultant and regional policy adviser for The Wahenga Institute, based in Johannesburg, South Africa.* The Wahenga Institute (TWI) is a non-profit making body, supporting the role of social protection as a key instrument for poverty reduction, social development and economic growth.

undermine the free market" (Wylie, 2001). Paradoxically, despite the state's hardline commitment to the free market principles, the chief patriarch for the NAD knew that he had won political support by being perceived as the giver of gifts, including food assistance and other relief measures. The colonial government that provided relief and assistance through food distribution programmes during three state-defined famines proved both corrupt and often unwilling to provide adequate food relief (Wylie, 2001).

In 1948, the Afrikaner National Party (NP) rose to power and this marked the foreshadowing of the government's departure from the paternalist food-relief structures of the colonial regime. The country entered a period of Apartheid, a social and political policy of racial segregation and discrimination enforced by white minority governments in South Africa from 1948 to 1994. The enactment of this policy, also known as "separate development", was made possible by the 1950 Population Registration Act. This act categorised and labelled all South Africans in four distinct categories (African Encyclopedia, 2010):

- Bantu (Black African);
- White (White, Caucasian);
- Coloured (of mixed race); and
- Asian (Indians and Pakistanis).

After the NP assumed control in 1949, it undertook studies to assess which state relief programmes it could eliminate, particularly aiming to cut allocations of government aid for non-white populations (Greer-Love, 2003). Wylie (2001) has identified several successive NP acts and policies that significantly undermined the necessary provision of food, particularly in the segregated townships. In a 1949 report on school feeding, the NP concluded that the school feeding scheme was necessary because of the deterioration of physiques among the African children attending school, but resisted it on the grounds that it reduced parental responsibility and caused dependence.

As a result, the subsequent NP policy pronounced drastic cuts in funding for feeding schoolchildren. Unfortunately, this initial cut in food assistance for schoolchildren marked the first in a series of racist government measures aimed at ending much-needed government food relief. The predominant policy framework resulted in widespread hunger among Africans and ultimately compelled the apartheid government to engage, albeit reluctantly, in relief measures in order to avoid projecting the images of crisis conditions internationally (Wylie 2001). The existence of large-scale hunger in South Africa was confirmed by hunger experts who worked within the apartheid government structures. The government, however, responded to the evidence with disapproval and denied responsibility for, and sometimes even the existence of, hunger (Wylie, 2001). All subsequent cuts in food relief occurred against the backdrop of the more infamous and brutal seizures of local land and of violent resettlement schemes, forcing black Africans to relocate in crowded townships and later to the so-called homelands (Greer-Love, 2003). As an overall consequence of the apartheid government and its policies, before 1994 the majority of South Africans were denied political rights and excluded from participating in the economic mainstream.

The arrival of democracy in 1994 was associated with major political and economic policy shifts. On the political front, South Africa started to design and implement policies that aimed

to reverse past apartheid impacts and that were conducive to democratic consolidation, competitive multi-party engagement and civil participation. South Africa's current economy includes a modern financial and industrial sector supported by well-developed infrastructure, which operates alongside a significantly large informal subsistence sector. In 2009, continuing the trend of previous years, a large part of the national budget was allocated to job creation, service delivery, enhancing the productive capacity of the economy and supporting the poor (USDA, 2006, cited in Labadarios, 2009).

3 POVERTY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Despite the political and economic advances made since 1994, South Africa continues to experience major challenges of poverty, unemployment and, more recently, steep increases in food and fuel prices, energy tariffs and interest rates. These adverse conditions have placed ordinary South Africans, already struggling to meet their basic household needs, in an ever more vulnerable situation (Labadarios, 2009).

Poverty and food insecurity manifest themselves differently in rural and urban areas. The 2007 UN "World Urbanization Prospects" highlights an upward trend in urbanisation in South Africa, and in 2010 it projected that over 30 million people (61.7 per cent) will live in urban areas (UN, 2007). Moreover, the Prospects indicate that the rural annual population growth rate is negative at -0.92 per cent, compared to positive growth of 1.17 per cent in the urban areas. Labadarios (2000) concluded that the differences in the presence of hunger by area of residence (urban or rural) and by province were both statistically significant ($p<0.0001$).

Between 1980 and 2009 South Africa's Human Development Index[1] (HDI) rose by 0.14 per cent annually from 0.658 to 0.683 in 2009, giving the country a rank of only 129 of 182 countries, close to the ranking of India (134) and far removed from Brazil (75). Since food insecurity in South Africa is mainly related to a lack of food purchasing power, as we will discuss in greater detail in the sections below, the Human Poverty Index (HPI) is an enlightening statistic to look into. The HPI focuses on the proportion of people below certain threshold levels in each of the dimensions of the HDI: living a long and healthy life, having access to education, and having a decent standard of living. The HPI value of 25.4 per cent for South Africa gives the country a rank of 85 among 135 countries for which the index has been calculated (UNDP, 2009). Table 1 provides an overview of the main indicators for selected countries.

TABLE 1

Extract from UNDP's *Human Development Report, 2009* for South Africa, India and Brazil

HDI value	Life expectancy	Adult literacy	Education enrolment	GDP per capita (PPP in USD)
1. Norway	1. Japan	1. Georgia	1. Australia	1. Liechtenstein
75. Brazil	81. Brazil	71. Brazil	40. Brazil	78. South Africa
129. South Africa	128. India	80. South Africa	77. South Africa	79. Brazil
134. India	158. South Africa	120. India	134. India	128. India
182. Niger	176. Afghanistan	151. Mali	177. Djibouti	181. Congo DR

Source: UNDP (2009).

The interesting picture that emerge from these statistics is that each of the three countries performs very differently in each of the HDR categories, highlighting the uniqueness of each situation and potential for dialogue between the countries.

The adoption of the 1996 Constitution for the Republic of South Africa marked the enactment of one of the world's most liberal constitutions. Among the provisions secured under the constitution are rights aimed at ensuring the physical well-being and health of all South Africans, including the right to food (Greer-Love, 2003). As part of the "policy revolution" after 1994, and influenced by the country's poverty and food insecurity, emphasis was placed on developing a comprehensive food-security strategy. Given the lack of a pre-existing and unified approach, the cabinet decided to formulate a national strategy. Two other, related factors lay behind the decision to establish the IFSS: first, until then the government had not acted on the constitutional provision of the right to food; and second, the South African government had assumed a range of regional and international obligations to evaluate and report on the state of food security (Drimie and Ziervogel, 2005).

4 THE INTEGRATED FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY

South Africa's inability to meet basic needs has a variety of causes but, in contrast to most other countries, poverty and hunger are particularly shaped by the legacy of apartheid. One aspect of that system was the deliberate dispossession of assets, such as land and livestock, from members of the black majority, while denying them opportunities to develop, access to markets, infrastructure and human capital. In addition, until 1985 agricultural policies pursued self-sufficiency, thus protecting domestic commercial farm production, often at the cost of consumers, resulting in a total welfare loss for the country as a whole (Agriculture Policy Unit, 1997). Post-apartheid policies, including the IFSS, all aim to address the adverse impact of apartheid and move the country forward as a unity.

As a consequence of the policy debates on agriculture and food security, the IFSS turned out to be a multidimensional strategy, structured mainly around household food security in rural areas. The arrangements proposed in the strategy appear to be an innovative blend of mechanisms with clear programmes, coordinating units and multi-sectoral fora to stimulate and support programmes that would engage creatively with food insecurity.

Section 27 (1) of the South African Constitution, states clearly that "Everyone has the right to have access to … sufficient food and water … The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available recourses, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights." (IFSS, 2002).

The vision of the IFSS is "to attain universal physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food by all South Africans at all times to meet their dietary and food preferences for an active and healthy life." This vision is closely aligned with the definition of food security provided by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

The IFSS's goal is linked to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially MDG 1, and is "to eradicate hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity by half by 2015."
The strategy identifies five objectives:

- increased household production and trading;
- improved income generation and job creation opportunities;

- improved nutrition and food safety;
- increased safety nets and food emergency management systems; and
- improved analysis and information system management.

The IFSS has adopted a broadly developmental rather than strictly agricultural approach to food security. It focuses mainly on household food security, without overlooking national food security, although South Africa is food-secure.

Building on the vision quoted above, the IFSS develops the concept and understanding of food security along the lines of four distinct but inter-related components:

- *Food availability*: an effective or continuous supply of food at both national and household level. This is affected by input and output market conditions, as well as the production capabilities of the agricultural sector.
- *Food access or effective demand*: the ability of the nation and its households to acquire sufficient food on a sustainable basis. This addresses issues of purchasing power and consumption behaviour.
- *Reliability of food*: utilisation and consumption of safe and nutritious food.
- *Food distribution*: equitable provision of food to points of demand at the right time and place. This spatial/time aspect of food security relates to the fact that a country might be food-secure at the national level, but still have regional pockets of food insecurity at various points of the agricultural cycle.

The IFSS has five broad pillars:

- production and trading;
- income opportunities;
- nutrition and food safety;
- safety nets and food emergency; and
- information and communication.

The last pillar, "information and communication", is distinct from the others and this brief analysis of the policy framework will not deal with it. The basic structure of the IFSS is built around the principles of sharing and overlapping with goals of government departments. Hence the IFSS does not have its own dedicated programme with actions in place; instead, it aims to bring together various programmes of different ministries.

4.1 PILLAR 1: PRODUCTION AND TRADING

The primary objective of the IFSS is to overcome rural food insecurity by increasing the participation of food-insecure households in productive agriculture-sector activities and creating linkages that will bring growth and development benefits to all citizens. Hence the goal is to *improve household food production, trade and distribution*. The Department of

Agriculture is the lead agency in this area, with the Departments of Land Affairs, Health, Public Works, Water Affairs and Forestry, and Trade and Industry forming part of the cluster. The key policy actions under the programme are mainly related to increasing access to productive assets, including credit; increasing access to technologies, including food processing; supporting agriculture extension services; and improving infrastructure and trade regulations (IFSS, 2002). The policy actions seek to help certain targeted populations, such as specific vulnerable groups (for example, female-headed households, young people, the disabled), small-scale farmers, emerging farmers[2] and commercial farmers.
Section 5 describes the scope and elements of the IFSS in greater detail.

The main programme in place to underpin this pillar is the Comprehensive Agriculture Support Programme (CASP 2003–2005). CASP aims to provide post-settlement support to the targeted beneficiaries of land reform, and to other producers who have acquired land through private means and are engaged in value-adding enterprises for the domestic or export markets. The programme benefits the hungry, subsistence and household-food producers, farmers and agricultural macro-systems in the consumer environment. The programme is a core focus for the Department of Agriculture and makes interventions in six priority areas:

- information and technology management;
- technical and advisory assistance, and regulatory services;
- marketing and business development;
- training and capacity building;
- on/off farm infrastructure and product inputs; and
- financial support

In the current Medium Term Expenditure Review, CASP had a budget of US$119 million for 2010/11[3] (Treasury, 2010). Surprisingly, there is no reference in the IFSS to the agriculture support programme and, in turn, CASP makes no reference to the IFSS or to any complementary role it can play.

4.2 PILLAR 2: INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to the focus on production and trade, the IFSS supports measures that create a labour-intensive and diversified agricultural sector with strong links to the other economic sectors. The objective of this programme is to *increase income and job opportunities.*
This area is led by the Department of Trade and Industry; other parts of the cluster include the Departments of Agriculture, Public Works, Water Affairs and Forestry, Minerals and Energy, Public Enterprises, Transport and Communications. The key policy actions under this programme are related to access to credit, skills and training, local economic development, public works programmes, strengthening market systems with information and infrastructure, and livelihood diversification, including off-farm income generation (IFSS, 2002).
The policy actions aimed to support vulnerable groups, mainly young people and food-insecure poor households.

Although South Africa's efforts to combat unemployment and stimulate economic growth are brought together under the 1996 Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR)

macroeconomic strategy, the main programme in terms of budget and scope to underpin the IFSS's pillar 2 is the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). This has a 2010/11 budget of US$54 million for the provincial and social-sector grants (Treasury, 2010). The key policy actions under pillar 2 are similar to some of the priority areas under CASP, which is the main programme under pillar 1. The two programmes, however, are implemented by different departments (Agriculture and Public Works) and the links between them are not easily identified, except in implementation and monitoring reports. The IFSS, since it is a coordinating strategy, is tasked with creating these links and providing a platform for information exchange. The EPWP is one of government's main programmes geared to providing poverty and income relief through temporary work for the unemployed to carry out socially useful activities. The EPWP was launched in April 2004 to promote economic growth and create sustainable development. Its immediate goal was to help alleviate unemployment by creating at least 1 million work opportunities in its first phase, with at least 40 per cent of the beneficiaries being women, 30 per cent youth, and 2 per cent people with disabilities. The programme involves reorientating line function budgets and conditional grants so that government expenditure results in more work opportunities, particularly for unskilled labour.

By April 2009, some 16,869 projects had been established in the areas of infrastructure, the economy, the environment, and the cultural and social sectors, creating close to 600,000 work opportunities at an average daily wage of US$8.90. Most of the work has been created in KwaZulu Natal, Limpopo and the Free State, which are all predominantly rural provinces. Some 204 projects have been created in the agricultural sector, resulting in 8,420 work opportunities, mainly for women (53 per cent), young people (51 per cent) and disabled people (1.7 per cent).[4] The largest category of work under the EPWP is the infrastructure sector, with 5,404 projects (mostly related to electricity supply and road building); this is followed by the environment and culture sector (including agriculture), with 897 projects, mainly related to water. Most of the agriculture projects have been created under CASP (134 projects and 4,807 work opportunities). But the average daily wage is lower than the national average wage for the EPWP and stands at US$6.25. This highlights the low-return and low-wage characteristics of the agricultural sector (EPWP, 2009). As regards institutional arrangements, the EPWP is the overarching umbrella and the public works projects implemented under CASP contribute to the EPWP and are described in the EPWP progress reports.

There is broad agreement that the EPWP must not displace existing permanent jobs and that all opportunities must be based on real demand for services. The EPWP will not solve the structural unemployment problem (Department of Public Works, 2010). It is merely one element within a broader government strategy to reduce poverty by alleviating and reducing unemployment.

4.3 PILLAR 3: NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY

The third pillar stems from the understanding that food security does not necessarily guarantee good nutritional status. In order to improve the nutritional status of food-secure and food-insecure South Africans, a multi-pronged approach has been developed and the main objective of this programme is to *improve nutrition and food safety*. The Department of Health is the lead agency in this area, together with the Departments of Agriculture, Water Affairs and Forestry, and Trade and Industry as cluster members. The main actions include public education, improvement in food and nutrition monitoring methods, targeted nutrition

interventions for chronically vulnerable groups, and training to integrate food and nutrition concerns into development programmes (IFSS, 2002). The targeted population consists of nutritionally vulnerable communities and groups, and within these areas the priority target groups for nutrition interventions have been identified as:

- children under six years of age;
- at-risk pregnant and lactating women;
- primary school children from poor households;
- people suffering from chronic diseases of lifestyle or communicable diseases; and
- at-risk elderly persons.

The main programme of this pillar is the National School Nutrition Programme, with an expanded budget of more than US$500 million in 2010/11 (Treasury, 2010). The programme aims to provide well-balanced meals to students in the hope that their concentration and performance levels will improve, ultimately influencing their learning process. The programme is an important part of the government's interventions that seek to create a better life for all, and it can help South Africa meet the MDGs, especially in halving poverty and making education accessible to the population by 2014 (Public Service Commission, 2008).

By March 2009, the National School Nutrition Programme supported some 5.6 million students in about 18,000 schools on a daily basis during school terms, at a cost of US$0.21 per child per day. The schools in which the programme runs are mainly located in the poorest (first and second quintile as measured by community poverty levels) primary and secondary schools. There were also 6,503 food gardens in schools. About 26,408 food handlers are working on the programme and receive a monthly payment, contributing to job creation and income generation (Government, 2010).

4.4 PILLAR 4: SAFETY NETS AND FOOD EMERGENCIES

One overarching principle of the IFSS is to create an economic environment that is pro-poor, and that enables food-insecure households to insert themselves into the economic mainstream. Some vulnerable groups, however, rely on the provision of public goods, such as safety nets, information management systems, and emergency management systems.[5] Hence this programme's main goal is to *enhance safety nets and food-emergency management systems*. The actions in this area are led by the Department of Social Development and the Department of Provincial and Local Government; other parts of the cluster are the Departments of Agriculture, Public Works, and Water Affairs and Forestry. The key actions consist of social safety nets, information and data management, mapping techniques, information dissemination and emergency relief operations (IFSS, 2002). The targeted population consists of vulnerable groups, mainly children, the elderly, the disabled and the destitute.

The main initiative is a national comprehensive social protection programme with a budget of US$12 billion for 2010/11 and an additional US$69 million for the Social Relief from Distress (SRD) programme (Treasury, 2010). The money allocated to the SRD increased from US$1.9 million in November 2008 to US$8 million in January 2009 and to US$69 million by 2011 (Government, 2010). There are now almost 14 million beneficiaries of one of the grants

under the comprehensive social protection programme. In 2007, some 66 per cent of the total beneficiaries received the Child Support Grant, 18 per cent received the Old Age Pension, 12 per cent received the Disability Grant and 4 per cent benefitted from the Foster Child Grant (Municipal Outreach Project, 2010). Analysis of the programme's budget indicates that South Africa's social security system is the government's main initiative for tackling poverty and inequality-related problems. It has two main objectives. The first is to immediately reduce poverty among groups that are not expected to participate fully in the labour market, and thus are vulnerable to low income: the elderly, those with disabilities, and children. The second is to increase investment in health, education and nutrition, with the overarching aim of increasing economic growth and development (ODI, 2006).

These twin objectives stem from the government's 1997 White Paper on Social Development, which states that "a social security system is essential for healthy economic development, particularly in a rapidly changing economy, and will contribute actively to the development process. It is important for immediate alleviation of poverty and is a mechanism for active redistribution" (ODI, 2006).

There are five major social security grants, all part of the national comprehensive social programme: the state Old Age Pension, the Disability Grant, the Child Support Grant, the Foster Child Grant and the Care Dependency Grant. An income-based means test is used to determine eligibility for each grant. The grants are financed through general tax revenues, collected on a national basis. The amounts paid have increased significantly in real terms since 2001, while the coverage of the Child Support Grant has expanded by extending the eligibility age up to 18 (SASSA, 2009).

The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) also provides for a food security grant, which covers the provision of food parcels to the most vulnerable people in order to alleviate poverty. This service is also applicable to charity organisations helping to alleviate poverty. The beneficiaries of the scheme are vulnerable groups as per social development criteria. These are:

- children and child-headed households;
- orphaned children;
- people with disabilities;
- female-headed households; and
- HIV/AIDS-infected and affected households.

Though this grant specifically aims to increase food security, the budget, scope and number of beneficiaries is unknown and information on the expected medium-term expenditure is very difficult to locate (Government, 2010). This could be because these vulnerable groups are already covered by the various other social grants, and in general people cannot benefit from multiple grants. The five major social grants account for 99 per cent of the total beneficiaries of the grant system, leaving only 1 per cent for all the other grants (of which there are more than 20 different types).

The success of South Africa's social security system in terms of targeting and benefiting poor households is recognised worldwide, and South Africa is a point of reference for many

other countries. Several factors have contributed to this success, including political leaders who recognise the importance and actively support appropriate policies, a social development minister who effectively champions their implementation and extension, and a well-mobilised civil society that continually pushes the government to move further (ODI, 2006).
The current policy debate concerns the case for a universal social basic income grant available to all South Africans.

Table 2 provides an overview of the structure of the IFSS, its pillars, scope, beneficiaries, main programmes and budget.

TABLE 2
Overview of the IFSS Structure

Pillar	Scope	Beneficiaries	Main programme
Pillar 1: production and trading	To ensure that identified food--insecure populations gain access to productive resources to produce food.	Vulnerable groups (e.g. female-headed households, young people, disabled), small-scale farmers, emerging farmers and commercial farmers.	Comprehensive Agriculture Support Programme, budget 2010/11: US$119 million.
Pillar 2: income opportunities	To ensure that people have access to income and job opportunities to enhance food related purchasing power.	Vulnerable groups (mainly young people and food-insecure poor households).	Expanded Public Works Programme, budget 2010/11: US$54 million.
Pillar 3: nutrition and food safety	To ensure that food insecure people are empowered to make appropriate decisions around nutritious and safe food.	Mainly poorest (community poverty levels) 1st and 2nd quintile primary and secondary schools	National School Nutrition Programme, expanded budget 2010/11 US$500 million.
Pillar 4: safety nets and food emergencies	To ensure that the state provides relief measures which could be short- to medium-term and on a sustained basis.	Vulnerable groups, children, elderly, disabled and those in destitution.	National Social Security Scheme, budget 2010/11: US$12.4 billion, including US$96 million for Social Relief from Distress.

5 CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The process of providing food security for all will not be fast. Despite strong government commitment, tremendous disparities in food security persist (HSRC, 2008), many of them linked to inequality issues in terms of geographic location, gender and race. Statistics suggest that food insecurity is most severe in rural areas, where most of the poor live (70 per cent). Apart from that, most of the rural population are black Africans. Nearly a third of all South African households are female-headed, which are considerably poorer than male-headed households. Some 52 per cent of female-headed households spent less than US$140 per month in 1996, while the corresponding figure for male-headed households was 35 per cent (IFSS, 2002). Although the IFSS is recognised as an innovative strategy and a comprehensive approach to tackling food insecurity in South Africa, many argue that it has not achieved many of its goals. However, despite several challenges associated with the food-security policy framework, there have been notable and important achievements. The major achievements and challenges in specific thematic areas are outlined below.

5.1 THE RIGHT TO FOOD

The obligation to respect the right to food requires the South African government to take no measures that could deprive people of their right to food—for example, measures that prevent people from having access to food as happened under the apartheid regime. The obligation to protect the right to food means that the government should enforce appropriate laws and take other relevant measures to prevent anyone violating the right to food of others. The obligation to fulfil the right to food entails that governments must pro-actively engage in activities intended to strengthen people's access to and use of resources, in order to enable them to feed themselves. As a last resort, whenever an individual or group is unable to enjoy the right to adequate food for reasons beyond their control, states have the obligation to fulfil that right directly. In summary, the right to food means that governments must not take actions that result in increasing levels of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. It also means that governments must protect people from the actions of powerful others that might violate the right to food. Furthermore, governments must, to the maximum of their available resources, invest in the eradication of hunger (Right to Food, 2010).

5.1.1 Proposal for a Legal Framework for the Implementation of the Right to Food in South Africa[6]

South Africa's constitution enshrines the right to food. This is an excellent starting point for introducing a national framework law on the right to food, which would guide a political and legislative process towards the full realisation of this constitutional right.

The UN General Comment 12 on the right to food in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights envisages such a national framework law as a state obligation. South Africa's Supreme Court does refer to standards in the context of the Covenant, and a framework law would be a crucial instrument to bring the right to food from the constitution to the people who need it.

Implementation of the human right to food is complex. It requires political measures, laws and programmes in several areas such as social, agrarian and economic policies. The signatory states of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) have committed themselves to realising the right to food within their own states and in general. Some steps have already been taken, while some very important steps remain to be taken. A national legislative framework for the right to food could dynamise and control implementation.

Current legislation to implement the human right to food is implicit rather than explicit. In countries around the world there are bits and pieces of legislation that implement this human right for certain groups in certain situations, mostly without spelling out the right as such. What is missing is a clear sense of direction, a stocktaking of where we are, and another crucial element: a framework law that will guide the process of filling the gaps in the current legislative framework, and at the same time provide a timetable, targets and implementation details for the process leading to the full realisation of the human right to food.

The human right to food came into effect in international law in 1976 as part of the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The World Food Summit of 1996 led to a series of political and legal initiatives for the implementation of the right to food. Since then, the right has been the object of a number of international legal instruments.

In 1999, the UN Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights put forward General Comment 12 on the Right to Food as an official interpretation of the human right to food in international law. The comment describes the normative content of the right and states obligations resulting from it. It emphasises the necessity of justiciable remedy mechanisms for the victims of violations of this human right, and the development of national strategies to start introducing the respective policies, laws and programmes. Paragraph 29 says: " States should consider the adoption of a framework law as a major instrument in the implementation of the national strategy concerning the right to food."

The idea of a national framework law is a novelty in the field of human rights. A framework law is largely an agreement on procedures for regulating a complex process. Such an agreement on procedures is easier to reach than an agreement on material contents. A framework law in a field that implies complex regulation thus has the advantage of initiating a well defined process, rather than trying to solve all implementation problems at the same time. But the risk of a framework law is the indefinite postponement of difficult next steps. To minimise this risk, a framework law contains benchmarks, monitoring devices and other implementation mechanisms to promote a dynamic process.

In the national context, the purpose of a framework law is to institutionalise a complex process of regulation, which requires the bundling of heterogeneous interests. This process provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the subject matter and establishes mechanisms to overcome obstacles. Domestic law, especially in the area of economic and social human rights, usually does not refer to such rights and does not see itself as serving this larger purpose. The respective legislations are rather a disparate collection of single laws and " social achievements". Human rights are thereby barred from becoming terms of reference for legislation. Here, a framework law for the right to food can drastically improve the situation and offer new possibilities.

The process leading to a national framework law should be driven by national civil society. Of course, in the end a majority of legislators have to support such a law. The process leading to such a majority would therefore be very inclusive and link different actors in civil society—and, increasingly, people from academia, government, and political parties and movements.

The mobilisation effort for a framework law could be divided into three stages:

- Stage 1: defining aims and human rights mobilisation;
- Stage 2: taking stock;
- Stage 3: legislative process.

At first sight, the aim of the framework law seems obvious: the abolition of hunger and malnutrition. But it goes beyond that. The aim laid down in ICESCR, article 2.1, is the full realisation of the human right to food. Full realisation implies that a citizen whose right to food is violated by the state through a breach of the obligation to respect, protect or fulfil must be able to bring charges against the state and find remedy in the courts.

If this vision of a legally guaranteed freedom from hunger and malnutrition is shared across different sections of (civil) society, then there will there be a chance to implement it with the help of framework legislation. Human rights education can help to strengthen the vision in

the country, and there is a particular need for the participation of politicians and civil-society leaders in this process. Human rights competence, as well as legislative and administrative capacities, have to move along with the human rights vision.

An important step forward would be the formation of a "National Task Force" of people from community-based organisations (trade unions, farmers' organisations, women's organisations and so on) from civil society, academia and the political sphere, and especially from among those affected by the violation of the right to food. This task force would not only be able to secure broad acceptance of the objectives, but also bring together the necessary expertise. In that context, political acceptance of the idea of a framework law can develop, and possibly cut across party lines. Stage 2 can then be initiated.

A stocktaking exercise might consist of three phases. First, in order to be able to define the substance of a framework law, one has to identify how far existing legislation, policies and the actions of third parties (such as large landowners or private companies) are responsible for destroying certain groups' ability to feed themselves. This concerns the state's obligations to respect and protect, which emanate from the ICESCR. The following can serve as a checklist of elements to be included in more detail in a framework law governing the obligations to respect and protect:

Obligation to respect

- The prohibition of forced eviction of vulnerable groups from their bases of subsistence.
- Mechanisms for compensation in cases where forced eviction has already been effected.
- The revision of all forms of discrimination inherent in legislative and budgetary measures.

Obligation to protect

- Mechanisms for protection when third parties evict a vulnerable group from its bases of subsistence, and mechanisms of punishment and compensation for evictions already effected.
- Guarantee of security of land tenure and other productive resources.
- Effective regulation of workers' rights.
- Guarantee of non-discrimination against women in the area of work as well as in relation to ownership of property and productive resources.
- The guarantee of the traditional rights of indigenous communities in relation to their natural resources.

In a second step, the state's obligation to fulfil should be scrutinised. Groups already suffering from hunger and malnutrition must be identified, and the effectiveness of the state's existing policies and legislative measures to combat hunger and malnutrition in these groups must be investigated. The obligation to fulfil implies the state's commitment to immediate and

long-term measures (such as effective agrarian reform, a basic income grant, minimum wage) geared to the eradication of hunger and making these programmes accessible to every vulnerable person. The obligation to fulfil also implies that everyone's access to these programmes is made justiciable, meaning that individuals may sue the state if the programmes fail to deliver them from hunger and malnutrition. The following list of elements should be looked at in more detail in a framework law regarding the obligation to fulfil:

Obligation to fulfil

- Identification of vulnerable groups and causes of their vulnerability.
- Ensuring the application of legislation for a minimum salary that covers the basic food basket.
- Ensuring the application of legislation that guarantees the maximum use of available resources to improve the access to productive resources (such as through agrarian reform) of social groups affected by malnutrition.
- Ensuring the application of legislation that guarantees a minimum income for social groups affected by malnutrition.
- Ensuring the application of legislation that guarantees food aid or other support in emergency situations to groups threatened by malnutrition.

Finally, the framework law must contain details about procedure—that is, the concrete steps to be taken in order to move forwards with implementation.

Steps to be taken

- Recognition of the criteria of progressive realisation of the implementation of the right to food in the legislation.
- Establishment of concrete steps to reconcile national legislation with the requirements of the obligations of the right to food, and achieving progress over time.

The ensuing legislative process will require the setting of priorities. In order for the legislative process to succeed, one of the main issues to be dealt with will be the question of resources for funding the framework legislation and the programmes to be established. The legislative process per se begins with the formulation of a draft law on the basis of the above stocktaking exercise. In this process, different options have to be developed: drawing up of a list of measures, prioritising them measures, financing, a timeframe and benchmarks. More specific legal measures in the future can build upon this first phase. This should be done with the inclusion of community-based organisations and civil society.

It could prove useful to adopt international legal instruments for the right to food in national law. The General Comment suggests in paragraph 33: "The incorporation in the domestic legal order of international instruments recognising the right to food, or recognition of their applicability, can significantly enhance the scope and effectiveness of remedial

measures and should be encouraged in all cases. Courts would then be empowered to adjudicate violations of the core content of the right to food by direct reference to obligations under the Covenant." It should be clear, of course, that such an adoption of international law cannot replace national framework legislation with regard to the abovementioned three levels.

A framework law is a flexible instrument that allows for a systematic focus on the realisation of the right to food. It therefore serves the purpose of the South African constitution. Moreover, it is in line with international human rights law, which sees such a law as a state's obligation under the ICESCR. Even if such a law might not seem feasible today or tomorrow, it is worth starting a national campaign towards that goal. This process will also generate and/or strengthen the actors and monitoring mechanisms, which will ensure that a framework law, once adopted, will be implemented.

The objectives of a forthcoming food security bill to enforce the right to food might look like this:

> "To regulate, develop and supervise the availability, accessibility, distribution and utilisation of food, the requirements on safety, quality and nutrition in the interest of human health as a fundamental right in terms of the constitution by:
>
> - promoting agriculture and land reform;
> - promoting income enhancement through diversification;
> - ensuring access to social security and welfare services;
> - protecting livelihoods through disaster mitigation;
> - promoting food consumption and nutrition; and
> - creating an honest and responsible food trade."

5.1.2 The Right to Food: Achievements and Challenges

Although the IFSS does not refer specifically to the right to food, South Africa adopted a rights-based approach to food security in 1996, which is entrenched in its constitution. The food-security framework expresses a paradigm shift that recognises that agricultural production and food security at the national level are not the only considerations, but that a more complex range of circumstances may contribute to food insecurity, such as the failure of livelihoods to guarantee access to sufficient food. The country recognises the importance of enabling people to feed themselves, but where this is not possible it aims to ensure that strategies, plans and programmes are in place to address food insecurity. South Africa's rights-based approach is linked to poverty alleviation programmes and the empowerment of disadvantaged groups, and provides recourse in the event that a claimant's right to food, as ensured by the Bill of Rights, is violated.

Achievement: perceived hunger has fallen dramatically

The General Household Survey indicates that in the period 1994–1998 there appeared to be an increase in the percentage or share of households where children experienced hunger (perceived hunger). In the period 2002–2007, however, there has been a striking decline in child hunger in the same households. The finding echoes and strengthens the trends in poverty reduction (Altman, Hart and Jacobs, 2009).

The process that lead to inclusion of the right to food in the constitution stems from the efforts to avoid the widespread hunger and political state violence that characterised the country during the apartheid era. The inclusion of Section 27, under equal protections of the constitutional founding provision, demonstrated a significantly different non-discriminatory approach to food insecurity. During colonial times the state had provided minimal support to vulnerable groups and the apartheid state refused to provide relief to the non-white population. The newly elected regime started implementing measures to address the immediate and long-term food-security needs. The constitution mandates that the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) monitor the provision of the social and economic right under the constitution, including the right to food. SAHRC has established a system for reporting that allows for the collection of data from relevant spheres of government in order to evaluate the progressive realisation of the right to food (Greer-Love, 2003).

Achievement: food as a basic human right

A major achievement stems from the fact that the right to food has been enshrined in South Africa's constitution since 1996. This reinforces the commitment to food security and provides a pivotal entry point for work to resolve challenges and achieve goals.

SAHRC's 2000–2002 food security reports revealed significant deficiencies in the state's fulfilment of its constitutional obligations to ensure that all South Africans, particularly vulnerable groups, may exercise the right to food. Only five of the country's nine provinces reported that they had adopted or were in the process of adopting the National Department of Agriculture's Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS), which aimed "to establish short-term food programmes such as food gardens to augment food shortages in rural households and to sustain long-term food security for all". The SPFS has been a separate programme from the IFSS and was mainly implemented by FAO in conjunction with SAHRC. The current status of the SPFS is unknown. The SAHRC reports that although the National Department of Agriculture was tasked with the oversight of the SPFS, the department had not received any reports of how the allocated funds were used in any province (Greer-Love, 2003).

The two main challenges that hamper the fulfilment of the right to food can be summarised as legislative and measurement challenges, both of which are explained below.

5.1.2.1 Legislative Challenges

Legislation, which clearly defines the authority, responsibility, organisational structure and working procedures of the inter-ministerial committee responsible for implementing the IFSS programme, and the stakeholders, are absent. Furthermore, the absence of a food-security policy inhibits the government from providing a clear line of authority, as well as a means of enforcing implementation and acting against non-collaboration. In 2001, the government took significant steps to table a food security bill before parliament, but this process was never completed.

According to the Bill of Rights, anyone has the right to approach a competent court, alleging that a right in the Bill of Rights has been infringed or threatened, and the court may

grant appropriate relief, including a declaration of rights. The persons who may approach a court are (Government, 1996):

- anyone acting in their own interest;
- anyone acting on behalf of another person who cannot act in their own name;
- anyone acting as a member of, or in the interest of, a group or class of persons;
- anyone acting in the public interest; and
- an association acting in the interest of its members.

Theoretically, in the absence of a food-security act, the act that comes closest to protecting the right to food might be the 2004 Social Assistance Act.
The aims of this act (DSD, 2004) are to:

- provide for the administration of social assistance and payment of social grants;
- make provision for social assistance and determine the qualification requirements in respect thereof;
- ensure that minimum norms and standards are prescribed for the delivery of social assistance; and
- provide for the establishment of an inspectorate for social assistance.

The act also explains the different social grants, their scope and eligibility criteria.
It cannot, however, provide a full legal framework to underpin the right to food, since it mainly supports pillar 4 (safety nets) of the current IFSS and does not take all the dimensions of food security in account, nor the different factors that influence the right to food.

SAHRC is the national institution established to support constitutional democracy through the promotion and protection of human rights, including the right to food. South Africa took the first step in the implementation of an independent body (SAHRC) to monitor government agencies' efforts to ensure the realisation of social and economic constitutional human rights. Although South Africa has devised policies aimed at securing all citizens' right to access sufficient food, many food-security efforts remain ineffective because of a lack of enforcement. Despite the comprehensive mechanisms for review and reporting of deficits in government measures to improve food security, South Africa currently lacks an institution to oversee and enforce the necessary government intervention through implementation of food-security measures across governmental agencies and provinces (Greer-Love, 2003).

5.1.2.2 Recommendation to Overcome the Challenge

The current endeavours to develop a food-security policy and subsequent food-security bill will provide opportunities to start enacting the right to food and will strengthen the state's accountability to its citizens. The drafting is currently in the hands of a small working group in the Department of Agriculture, and there is quite a sharp focus on where the policy emphasis should be placed. But the policy has to go through an approval process and will have to pass through various stages and sectoral task teams. In order not to dilute the focus in that process,

it is critical that buy-in and ownership be created while the policy is being drafted and the focus is being determined. Hence it is strongly recommended that the policymaking process be agreed upon and finalised as soon as possible. The policy will provide a solid foundation for the subsequent food-security bill, which in turn will legalise the right to food.

As regards production and trade (pillar 1 in the IFSS), the food-security policy should cater to the diverse needs of different groups of farmers (the subsistence, small-scale and commercial farmers) that need different support from the government. Each group functions at different socioeconomic levels and deploys different livelihood strategies. Also recommended is a re-prioritisation of government spending, with an agreement on the percentage of the national budget to be used to buy directly from small-scale and emerging producers, so as to further underpin and create a powerful policy environment in which accountability and delivery are key principles. The government, for instance, could review the state's spending on food in schools, hospitals and correctional institutions, and determine its effectiveness and efficiency.

The current IFSS provides South Africa with an innovative policy tool to coordinate and bring together various stakeholders, but many informants have suggested that the strategy lacks the political clout to make a significant difference in the food-security situation. The participants in the Food Security Round Table of August 2010[7] recommended that the new policy be hosted within the National Planning Commission, directly linked to the Office of the President, the highest office in the country. The Commission sets the country's long-term vision and is able to keep different line ministries accountable. The speedy delivery of the policy is crucial because, in contrast to a "strategy", the "policy" will enable decisions and functions to be stipulated at a higher level, with enforcement authority over different departments and line ministries, and determining "who must be taken to jail when there is no delivery" (Food Security Round Table, 2010).

Moreover, participants at the Round Table suggested that the policy should be kept simple and uncomplicated, and should centre on the availability of food at the household level. The Department of Agriculture can take control, and can be held accountable for food access and for ensuring that food is generally available at that level. This would include agricultural, technical, and market-related support. If food is available at the household level but there is still food insecurity within that household, the Planning Commission can review the role of Departments of Health, Economic Development, Education, Social Development and others and hold them accountable for their deliverables in relation to food security. The new food-security policy will be driven by agriculture, in terms of both institutional home and thematic focus. The National Planning Commission will further ensure that other line ministries are aligned to the policy and underpin food security with clear objectives, performance targets and accountability structures (Food Security Round Table, 2010).

5.1.2.3 Measurement Challenges

Besides definitions of the policy concepts, the IFSS makes limited references to specific measurements or parameters for food security used in the framework. This is despite the fact that the strategy calls for continued monitoring and evaluation of the policy and the impact of related interventions. Measuring food insecurity is not as straightforward as it might seem. Currently, there is no specific and accepted measure of food insecurity and no standardised way of monitoring it. Contributing to this challenge is that food security is multidimensional

and changes frequently over time; it is almost a moving target and thus it is difficult to design accurate measurements and policy targets (HSRC, 2009). South Africa is food-secure at the national level, a circumstance that causes confusion between the food-secure status and the actual ability of households to access food. A household's ability to access food is less a function of total agro-food output than of the operation of the market and food distribution.

Food security in South Africa should be understood in connection with other developmental challenges and opportunities, such as rural and urban development; employment; social protection; health; access to services, land, inputs and water; and education and nutritional knowledge and practices. If these multiple elements that influence access to food and subsequent food security are not well understood, it becomes difficult to identify and design appropriate policies to improve individuals' and households' food security (HSRC, 2009). In the absence of a clear agreement on how to measure and monitor food security, it is not surprising that there are different statistics, each giving a slightly different assessment of the situation. The next section briefly touches on some of the more recent findings, and attempts to assess the level of food insecurity in South Africa.

The October Household Surveys (OHS) conducted yearly by Statistics South Africa between 1994 and 1999 each contained a question on the ability of households to feed children as a proxy indicator of food insecurity. It should be said, however, that the phrasing of the questions has not been consistent between years, which inevitably hampers comparability over time. But certain patterns can still be discerned. At the national level, between 25 and 33 per cent of households are unable to buy food to meet the dietary requirements of children at any given time.

The questionnaire of the General Household Survey (GHS) 2009 included for the first time a set of questions based on the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) to determine households' access to food as a proxy indicator for food insecurity.[8] Analysis of the data indicates that an estimated 20 per cent of South African households have inadequate or severely inadequate access to food. Food-access problems are most serious in the Free State where 33.5 per cent of households have inadequate or severely inadequate food access, followed by KwaZulu-Natal (23.1 per cent), Eastern Cape (21.4 per cent) and Mpumalanga (21.5 per cent). These provinces can be classified as mainly rural (StatsSA, 2009).

Taking a more nutritional approach and using nutrition indicators as proxies for food security, the abovementioned provinces are also those with high levels of stunting (low height for age) in the age group 1–9 years. The national level of stunting is 21.6 per cent, and thus stunting is the most prevalent nutritional disorder in South Africa (HSRC, 2004).

The main measurement of food security used in the IFSS is poverty-related and linked to the income-earning capacity of households in the nine different provinces, grouping them into quintiles of US$100 or less per month: between US$100 and US$200, between US$200 and US$360, between US$360 and US$700 and above US$700[9] (StatSA, 2000). About 70 per cent of households in the lowest two income quintiles are in rural areas and agriculture contributes less than 4 per cent to the total income of the poorest quintiles (HSRC, 2004). The IFSS mentions that a third of households spent less than US$200 per month, while only 18 per cent (1.63 million households) spent more than US$700 per month. These figures disguise the bi-polar mode of income distribution in South Africa: the country has many poor, food-insecure people and a few wealthy ones, mainly in the highly urbanised Gauteng and Western Cape provinces (IFSS, 2002). The 2000 document on measuring poverty in South Africa by Statistics

South Africa—the last comprehensive effort to measure poverty in the country—uses the average price of the food basket compared to household income and expenditure as a proxy for food insecurity. That is, when household income is less than the weighted expenditure on the food basket, the household is at risk of becoming food-insecure. According to this measure, 35 per cent of South Africans are food-insecure. This is one of the leading statistics in the IFSS. Other main measures that the policy framework uses to determine national food security are related to agricultural production, consumption and household expenditure (IFSS, 2002).

The IFSS says that the best available direct measure of food insecurity is the adequacy of daily energy intake (set at 2000 kcal/day), taking the World Health Organisation's (WHO) international ranges into account. Using seven-day recall expenditure data, it is estimated in the IFSS that 39 per cent of the population did not meet their daily energy requirement (2000 kcal/day). Compared to international ranges, protein energy malnutrition, as measured by stunting levels, is a moderate public health problem in South Africa.

The General Household Survey can also be used to assess the incidence of child hunger or perceived hunger as a proxy for food insecurity. The household questions refer to the experience of hunger and has the answer categories "No", "Never/Seldom", "Yes" or "Often/Always". In the period 1994–1998 there was an increase in the number of households with children experiencing hunger, averaging 35 per cent. For the period 1999–2001 the data are unavailable because of the absence of comparable surveys. But for 2002–2007, there has been a striking fall in perceived hunger to an average of 18 per cent over that period.

In retrospect, South Africa's late integration into the global arena could have hampered its understanding of the shifting definitions and measurements of food security. Moreover, given that the country is generally considered food-secure in terms of food availability, the relatively recent but complex focus on household and individual food security means that those concerned with the issue might still struggle to understand food insecurity and vulnerability. The main constraints that prevent regular and reliable reporting on trends in food insecurity and hunger have been identified as:

- the lack of recent national data;
- the use of different methodologies and criteria for selecting respondents; and
- the relatively long period between nutritional surveys (Hart, 2009).

Despite numerous indicators and proxies of food-security status in various national datasets, several sampling and methodological challenges make cross-dataset comparison close to impossible. These same constraints prevent any determination of household-level food security status (HSRC, 2009). Hence we have to conclude that little is known about household food-insecurity status in South Africa. From the analysis above, one can conclude with some level of certainty that a large proportion of South African households are food-insecure (HSRC, 2009). Furthermore, analysis of the data available to measure food insecurity in South Africa through malnutrition indicators and subjective food-security indicators as described above make the emerging trends clear: a greater percentage of households in rural areas was experiencing hunger than households in urban areas (HSRC, 2004). But it is not

possible to determine an exact baseline, and therefore it is impossible to monitor progress towards greater food security.

Table 3 takes into account all the different measures of food security.

TABLE 3

Measuring Food Insecurity according to Different Proxies and Methods

Source	Date	Proxy used	Estimated level of food insecurity
General Household Survey	2009	Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS)	20%
Nutrition indicators	2004	Stunting 1–9 years	21.6%
October Household Survey	1999	Household's ability to feed children	25–33%
General Household Survey	2007	Perceived hunger, incidence of child hunger	18%
Measuring Poverty, IFSS	2002	Household income and food basket expenditure	35%
Measuring Poverty, IFSS	2002	Daily energy intake	36%

Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of official data as mentioned in paragraph 5.1.2.3.

5.1.2.4 Recommendation to Overcome the Challenge

A robust food-security monitoring and evaluation system should be developed with an identified and agreed-upon target for food security. The South African Human Sciences Research Council has been spearheading work in this area and recommends that the government use a food-expenditure approach to identify a preliminary food-security target. Furthermore, experts have suggested starting from a recommended nutrient intake for every South African to live a healthy life as an agreed method for food security. The benefits of food security targets are evident (HSRC, 2010):

- they help to focus pro-poor policies and their interventions; and
- they support the efficiency of fiscal spending aimed at helping the poor and vulnerable to access enough food of the correct quality.

The target should take account of the following elements:

- household composition (household size and the number of children);
- wealth and livelihood strategy: income and assets;
- geography: urban/rural locations and formal and informal settlements;
- institutions: social networks, markets and the state;

- time: to determine whether food insecurity conditions are transitory or chronic; and
- risks: shocks that are related to the weather, prices, health and other factors.

It is therefore recommended that South Africa invest in further research and policy support: first to refine the food-security benchmark so as to deepen understanding and better target food-insecure households for specific interventions; and second to investigate options to enable low-income and food-insecure households to access nutritionally adequate food (HSRC, 2010). Furthermore, the new-food security policy must include an acceptable and context-specific definition of food security, tailor-made to the situation in South Africa, and identify tools and methodologies to measure the level of food insecurity, since this will enable the monitoring and evaluation of progress made towards achieving food security for all.

5.2 FOOD ACCESS

The topic of food access is closely linked to the right to food discussed above, and in South Africa the right to food is described as the right to *access* sufficient food. In the IFSS, food access is the ability of the nation or its households to acquire sufficient food on a sustainable basis. In South Africa this is mainly linked to issues of purchasing power and consumption behaviour or spending patterns. In this light, pillar 2, "increase income and job opportunities" and pillar 4, "safety nets" are most relevant to food access. The IFSS's main aim is to overcome rural food insecurity, which is in line with the fact that 70 per cent of the country's poorest households live in rural areas. However, all but a very small proportion of rural households do not produce enough food to meet their own needs and can be classified as net deficit food producers. While roughly 1.2 million households in rural areas derive some part of their income from farming, by far the greater part of household income generally consists of welfare payments, remittances and earnings from wage employment or self-employment (IFSS, 2002).

Poverty is multi-dimensional and cannot be reduced to a single definition, and people's access to enough food and income to cater for all their household needs is an important dimension of poverty and food security. Although these are by no means a comprehensive measure of poverty, they do measure some aspects of people's ability to secure basic necessities. In 2006, the Human Sciences Research Council processed its annual South African Social Attitudes Survey for 2003/05. The survey demonstrated that most black people still perceive themselves as lagging behind the other racial groups in South Africa in terms of access to enough food and income. These perceptions are important because they inform how people explain poverty. Policymakers and governments should take note of how people explain poverty, since it has a direct bearing on how they experience it (HSRC, 2006).

5.2.1 Food Access: Challenges and Achievements

The challenges and achievements are intimately linked to the challenges and achievements identified in the analysis of the right to food. As described under the different pillars of the IFSS, mainly pillar 4, a strong policy framework, closely related to the issue of food access, is South Africa's Framework for Comprehensive Social Protection (2003). But there is no formal reference to the social protection framework in the IFSS, even though it is the main programme under pillar 4. The IFSS is tasked with providing the coordinating structure for

food security, but the actual policy document does not mention the main programmes that contribute to the pillars; this information has been obtained through interviews and further document analysis.

Achievement: Comprehensive social protection

The government's commitment to provide social security to its citizens has paid off in many different ways. South Africa's social protection system is an example for many countries, and important lessons can be learned and shared. The income transfers provide many people in need with the means to buy food and ensure their household food security.

Income security is essential to addressing food insecurity. Recent evidence shows that social grants have played an important role in improving household food security since 2001, but improvements in employment status are also very important (Altman, Hart and Jacobs, 2009). The social protection framework sets out to provide basic means for all people in the country to effectively participate in and advance social and economic life, and in turn to ensure collectively at least minimum acceptable living standards for all citizens. The right to food is a constitutional right and is part of the minimum living standards the country aims to provide to its people. The framework is built around packages of services, one of which is the package aimed at income poverty: providing safety nets, both contributory and non-contributory. This package is important to food and covers the Child Support Grant, the Old Age Pension and other measures to support unemployed and poor households and individuals. South Africa's Comprehensive Social Protection Framework accounts for 3.1 per cent of the country's GNP, and is the country's biggest investment in people (DSD, 2007; ODI, 2006).

Three of the overarching challenges that hinder the country's progress towards food security, including food access, are in the areas of finance, human capacity, and the most appropriate institutional location. Each of these challenges is explained below, but they are applicable to all the thematic areas in this study.

5.2.1.1 Financial Challenges

There is uncertainty about the financial resources that have been made available to tackle food insecurity in general, and the IFSS in particular. Within the IFSS, a major financial challenge is related to the different departments involved in implementing the programmes that are part of the strategy. Since each of the four pillars falls under a line department with a dedicated budget allocation, additional resources have not been forthcoming. This leads to an aversion to working within the IFSS framework. This reluctance hampers the development of collaborative, food-security programmes that are funded by a single entity. The main programmes were already in existence and the IFSS was tasked with providing the coordinating and overarching strategy to bring together efforts to sustain food security. A calculation of the annual budgets available for each of the four main programmes under the four pillars could prompt the conclusion that the total combined financial injection into food security is about US$13–14 billion. But this figure is extremely distorted because the complete budget for social protection is included and, without that budget, the total figure for food security would be US$742 million.

5.2.1.2 Recommendation to Overcome the Challenge

While is it commendable to create a strategy that brings together current efforts, rather than creating new structures and policies and risking a duplication of efforts, it is recommended that a financial and accounting system be developed to track the spending of resources on food-security actions and interventions. It is also recommended that a central fund be made available to ensure alignment between the separate line ministries' functions.

5.2.1.3 Challenges of the Institutional Location

As a result of a historical bias towards agricultural production as the strategy for food security, the Department of Agriculture has stewardship of food security in the South African government. In that department, responsibility has been allocated to a directorate that is "institutionally weak", with no real ability to compel other directorates, let alone other government departments, to fall into line with the strategy (Hart, 2009).

5.2.1.4 Recommendation to Overcome the Challenge

The discussion during the Food Security Round Table have rise to the recommendation that the new food-security policy should be hosted within the National Planning Commission, the advisory body responsible for devising the country's development plans and policies. The Commission's mandate is to take a broad, cross-cutting, independent and critical view of South Africa, to help define the long-term vision for the coming 20 years, and to map out a path to achieve those objectives. The Commission is tasked with providing solid research, sound evidence and clear recommendations for the government. It has the leadership and authority to direct other ministries, and will provide the much-needed "weight" to food security and provide it with a powerful national profile, similar to the profile of HIV and AIDS.

A related complexity is that people cannot "see" food insecurity, mainly because at a national level the country is food-secure and shops and supermarkets are full of a variety of products. This underlines the need to host the food security policy in powerful structures. It is also recommended that an education campaign be launched among the different ministries to raise the profile of food security and highlight the linkages between the man dates and areas of work of these departments and food security.

5.2.1.5 Human Capital Challenges

The genesis of South Africa's skills policy framework is linked to its history as an apartheid state, the legacy of this in the labour market, and the post-1994 efforts to ameliorate the impact of apartheid on education and skills development. At the same time, South Africa's highly isolationist geopolitical and economic policies were substantively transformed in the democratic era, forcing firms to become more competitive and export-oriented, and similar trends emerged in the agricultural sector. This often resulted in reorganising the forms and methods of production, with implications for skills. The current economic recession has posed several challenges, and the country's ability to return to a economic prosperity depends on many things, an important component of which is the increasing efficacy of the skills-development regime (Daniels, 2007).

Redressing the imbalances of skewed human-resource development and improving the skills level of people in the agricultural sector is crucial to meeting the goals of the IFSS, but

that will require a structured approach to make optimum use of the existing training opportunities. The need to improve skills in the agricultural sector is based on the fundamental element of human capacity building. The Department of Agriculture participates in the government's international training strategy. This aims to strengthen the country's position in terms of regional and global competitiveness, and to build competence that will enable South Africans to address development issues in-country, be internationally competitive, and support other African countries in addressing issues for the region's development (NDA, 2006).

5.2.1.6 Recommendation to Overcome the Challenge

A concerted effort is needed to solve the current skills shortage and ensure that people with the correct qualifications, accountability and integrity fulfil posts. Implementing the IFSS requires skilled people to ensure that the desired outcomes are achieved within the prevailing policy and legislative framework. According to many development analysts in South Africa, the primary constraint is not money but human capacity (Eberhard, 2009; Lawless, 2008). Many analysts recommend that a management- and leadership-development programme for the food security and agricultural sector is needed.

5.3 AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT

The IFSS makes limited mention of specific agricultural support measures besides the support to small-scale household agricultural production under pillar 1. By May 2008, through the Household Food Production Programme (which is not part of CASP, but a separate programme under the Department of Agriculture) 15,765 food-production packages had been distributed and 6,390 vegetable gardens established. Through the Farmer Support Programme, which is also a separate programme under the Department of Agriculture, 903 clients received loans from Micro-Agricultural Financial Institutions of South Africa (MAFISA), and US$1.18 was disbursed between January and March 2008 (South Africa Online, 2010). South Africa has what is known as a dual agricultural economy. On the one hand, there is a well developed commercial sector; on the other, most people engaged in agriculture are involved in subsistence-oriented practices in rural areas. Agriculture contributes less than 4 per cent to GDP but accounts for 10 per cent of total reported employment (OECD, 2006). However, there are strong backward and forwards linkages to the economy, such that the agro-industrial sector accounts for about 12 per cent of GDP (South Africa Online, 2010).

About 12 per cent of the country can be used for crop production. High-potential arable land comprises only 22 per cent of total arable land, with about 1.3 million hectares under irrigation and agricultural activities ranging from intensive crop production and mixed farming to cattle ranching in the Bushveld,[10] and sheep farming in the more arid regions. Although South Africa has the ability to be self-sufficient in virtually all major agricultural products, the growth rate of exports has been slower than that of imports. The only increase in agricultural export volumes occurred during the period of exchange-rate depreciation in 2002. Maize is South Africa's staple food; other main grain and field crops include wheat, potatoes, vegetables, sugar and sunflower seed oil. The main import products include wheat, rice, vegetable oils and poultry meat.

5.3.1 Agricultural Support: Challenges and Achievements

The current agricultural season's maize crop is the biggest since a record 14.42 million tons harvested in 1981–82. The government's Crop Estimates Committee estimates the 2009–10

crop at 13.3 millions tons. The maize farmers have been tripped up by a combination of their own efficiency and favourable weather conditions. Agricultural output has soared in the past three seasons, boosted by good rains and increasing yields from genetically modified crops. According to sources in the agricultural industry, the national surplus is now more than 4 million tons (*Business Times*, 2010). The current market surplus, however, is resulting in a low maize price, and this threatens to put up to a third of the country's maize farmers out of business, with the emerging black farmers being hit extremely hard. There is now a call for farmers to cut their production by at least half and use the money they save to buy maize instead. Farmers who can switch to other crops such as wheat, soya beans or sunflowers are encouraged to do so but, by cutting maize production, South African farmers run the risk of losing market share to countries like Kenya, Botswana and Uganda (*Business Times*, 2010).

Achievement: production doubled

South Africa's agriculture production has nearly doubled during the past 30 years. There is production of maize in areas where it was not before.

In the predominantly white-controlled commercial sector, applied research and improved farm management have nearly doubled agricultural production during the past 30 years. Currently, South Africa is not only self-sufficient in virtually all major agricultural products, but in a normal year is also a net food exporter, making it one of six countries in the world able to export food on a regular basis (*Nations Encyclopedia*, 2010). According to AGRI-SA,[11] over 100 million hectares are used for commercial farming purposes, farmed by close to 40,000 commercial farmers. The average size of a commercial farm is about 2,500 hectares. The 1.3 million small-scale farmers occupy over 14 million hectares and their average farm size is just over 11 hectares. Their main production consists of maize for porridge and for staple food consumption, sorghum or wheat for bread or beer, and vegetables such as potatoes, pumpkin, sweet potato and dry beans (AGRI-SA, 2010).

In recent years agricultural support has been provided to land projects and agrarian reform projects; this contributes to food security, job creation and poverty alleviation. Agricultural support and land reform go hand in hand in South Africa. The main programme to support the agricultural sector is the Comprehensive Agriculture Support Programme described earlier in this report. It should be noted, however, that CASP only provides 15 per cent of the total agricultural support. CASP is designed to provide support to previously disadvantaged groups, which mainly comprise small-scale and emerging farmers. Commercial farmers can obtain support from CASP but the main emphasis of targeting is on the small and emerging farmers. The prime government response for commercial farmers is Market Price Support (MPS), which will be explained later.

Achievement: South Africa remained stable

During the 2008/9 global economic downturn and the subsequent financial turmoil, the South African economy, including the agricultural sector, remained relatively untouched and was able to progress steadily along its set path. This is mainly the result of solid macroeconomic and fiscal policies, but other government policies, including the IFSS, have contributed to this achievement.

The Micro-Agricultural Financial Institutions of South Africa (MAFISA) provides access to finance, which is the main modus operandi of CASP, for farmers and, especially, for beneficiaries of the land restitution, redistribution and land tenure reform programmes. MAFISA was created to address the financial constraints facing mainly the emerging farmers and agricultural businesses.[12] These included inadequate market activity; low levels of physical, financial and human capital; high transaction costs and interest rates; inadequate access to and long distances from financial-service providers; and inadequate personalised client services. For emerging farmers and agricultural businesses to yield and harvest their produce, they require short- and medium-term credit and savings mobilisation through local financial institutions. MAFISA's delivery channels are the network of private and civil-society organisations at the provincial level. The most common product provided by MAFISA is the production loan[13] of US$13,500, at an interest rate of 8 per cent. The government assumed 100 per cent capital risk and the loans were generally for twelve months. MAFISA sought to provide funding through participating institutions to address the financial-services needs of entrepreneurs in the informal economy and to strengthen the developmental, agricultural, micro-finance system for their benefit. The budget was US$27 million for the 2006/07 financial year and was mainly spent on broiler poultry production, farming equipment production, and piggery and ostrich production. It is important to note, however, that these type of activities are often undertaken by more established farmers whose output is more structured, and yet MAFISA is aiming to support the small and emerging farmers who are often not established and structured and who need support to reach that benchmark. This indicates a potential tension and a challenge to the objectives of MAFISA and the way in which the institution currently provides support.

The MAFISA progress report of 2008 indicates that in 2007, some 778 crop-production loans were disbursed (US$542,000), as were 201 poultry (broiler) production loans (US$113,000), two farming-equipment loans (US$14,000), one piggery production loan (US$1,400) and 102 ostrich-production loans (US$1.4 million) (NDA, 2008). Unfortunately, the progress report does not disaggregate the data by beneficiary or target group and it is therefore not possible to draw conclusions about the type of support given to each of the MAFISA beneficiary groups mentioned above.

The implementing partners report that the main challenges included the fact that most people wanted a grant, not a loan; lack of managerial skills; and the fact that there was currently no "one stop shop" to provide comprehensive financial support from access to finance, grants and loans to financial and budgeting advice and other services, all under the roof of one single financial institution focusing on agriculture (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2008).

Under CASP and during 2006, several policies and strategies were developed to promote sustainable agricultural production. These include policies on animal improvement, aquaculture, wildlife ranching, range and forage, grain, vegetables, industrial and indigenous crops, ornamental plants, and bio-safety.

Success in the agricultural sector is also affected by South Africa's participation in various trade agreements. The country is a signatory to several agreements that contributed to the liberalisation of the agricultural sector. Participation in global trade accords reduced distortions, and changes in South African agriculture in the past decade have been shaped by the policy revolution and by substantial macroeconomic and social reforms implemented from

the mid 1900s, but specific reforms of agricultural policies were also initiated around that time. These included deregulation of the marketing of agricultural products; abolition of certain tax concessions favouring the sector; reductions in budgetary expenditure on the sector; land reform; and trade policy reform (OECD, 2006). South Africa also undertook several labour policy reforms. The combination of liberalisation and stricter labour laws, however, exposed the agricultural sector to the adverse effects of globalisation, and even though the country remained relatively stable during the current global economic and financial crisis, the impact of the recession was felt hard, with over 900,000 jobs lost (Zuma, 2010).

The opening of the agricultural sector placed South Africa among the world's leading exporters of such agro-food products as wine, fresh fruit and sugar. The country is also an important trader in Africa. At the beginning of the current decade there was particularly strong growth in agricultural exports. South Africa's agricultural export revenues accounted for almost 9 per cent of total export values. Europe is by far the main market, taking almost half of the country's agricultural exports. Agricultural imports are also growing, though less rapidly than exports, accounting for 5–6 per cent of total annual imports since 2000 (OECD, 2006).

The withdrawal of most forms of support to commercial farmers created adjustment pressures for the sector, while deregulation of the input and services markets provided benefits. The effects on the sector were far-reaching and included (OECD, 2006):

- a shift of production out of grain and into livestock in marginal production areas, and an increase in intensive farming in high-potential areas, particularly horticultural production;
- greater farmer involvement in risk management by means of storage, forward contracts and diversification; and
- acceleration of the establishment of new enterprises in agriculture and food processing sectors and foreign trade.

Although market deregulation since 2005 created some uncertainty, at the same time it opened up opportunities for entrepreneurial farmers and led to a more efficient allocation of resources in agriculture. In sum, the South African agricultural industry has become less dependent on state support and is more internationally competitive, although many sectors in the industry experienced a difficult period of adjustment (OECD, 2006).

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has established a Producer Support Estimate (PSE)[14] to measure how much government support goes to the agricultural sector. According to OECD datasets, the PSE for South Africa equalled 5 per cent of gross farm receipt on average in the period 2000–03 and this trend continued to 2007. There was a slight increase in PSE in 2004–06 to 7 per cent, and a drop to 4 per cent in 2007. South Africa's PSE is well below the average level of support for OECD countries, which stands at 31 per cent, but the indicator is similar to the levels of farm support in Brazil (4 per cent), China (6 per cent) and Russia (6 per cent). The overwhelming share of the producer support is delivered through Market Price Support (MPS), which is regarded as a highly trade-distorting form of support. The relatively low level of support indicates a moderate degree of policy interventions at agriculture-producer level, and analysis of the overall trend indicates a reduction in support since 1994 when the new government took office in post-apartheid South Africa (OECD, 2009).

As a post-apartheid legacy, agricultural support cannot be discussed separately from land reform, but land reform is a difficult and costly exercise and is regarded as a main challenge from the perspective of agriculture support.

5.3.1.1 Land Reform Challenges

An significant amount (US$270 million) of public financial resources for agriculture support has been devoted to land reform. This spending is at a level similar to, for instance, the country's spending on literacy and numeracy workbooks in 11 official languages (Treasury 2010).
The Land Reform Programme has three main components:

- restitution of land unjustly taken from people and communities;
- land redistribution; and
- land tenure reform.

The land redistribution programme aims to transfer a third of agricultural land from white owners to previously disadvantaged individuals. Land redistribution seeks to provide people with access to land for either settlement or agricultural purposes. The aim, among other things, is to settle small and emerging farmers on viable farming operations in the commercial farming areas. In contrast to land restitution, the land redistribution programme has performed below targets because of inadequate institutional capacity, deficient financial resources, and a lack of appropriate agricultural support services and coordination (OECD, 2006).

Under the land reform programme, grants are given to the disadvantaged black population to acquire land or for other forms of on-farm activities. Beneficiaries can access a range of grants depending on the amount of their own contribution in labour and/or cash. Land restitution is well advanced, with more than 60 per cent of claims settled and more than 900,000 hectares of agricultural land restored to their former owners. Some 35 per cent of beneficiaries opted for compensation in cash, which contributed to poverty alleviation. Between 1994 and 2005, the government has spent about US$200 million on financial compensation.

The need to redress the inequitable land allocation that emerged from the apartheid past is driving the land reform in South Africa. There is a broad consensus that continued efforts are needed as a matter of urgency to resolve the land issue. At the same time, however, there is much controversy about how this should be done. The key challenges are to create stakeholder consensus on the implementation strategy and improve the procedures of land acquisition and resettlement. Land reform is a massive and complicated process.
The identification of realistic objectives and careful sequencing of activities are conditions for success. Land reform should lead to the emergence of viable farms. But some beneficiaries of land reform have suffered defaults, being inadequately prepared for commercial farming in a high-risk environment or unable to raise sufficient capital for commercial production.
Though agricultural development has a role in addressing poverty and inequalities, it is clear that the potential of agriculture and agricultural (land) reform itself to reduce poverty is limited. The long-term solution to poverty reduction requires involving a bigger proportion of the rural poor in economic activities that generate sufficient income. The main potential to

reduce rural poverty and inequity lies in the development of overall frameworks providing social security, education and training, and healthcare, and in developing adequate infrastructures in rural areas (OECD, 2006).

5.3.1.2 Recommendation to Overcome the Challenge

During the Food Security Round Table, participants were unequivocal as to why land reform has proven to be such a challenge: market access is lacking for the emerging farmers and agriculture extension services are needed to underpin and support the land reform process and the new farmers. But there are serious human-resource constraints for the agricultural extension staff, also called "food soldiers". Training and extension is essential, not only in farm technologies, but also in marketing and financial management. It is therefore recommended that adjustment assistance by extension staff be seen as an inherent component of land reform and thus should receive the necessary priority and investment. Furthermore, proper selection and follow-up of beneficiaries is crucial for land reform to develop sustainable commercial farming.

There is also much potential in the mentoring of new entrants by commercial farmers, a practice that has emerged in recent years. To boost this mentoring and stimulate the linkages and exchange of knowledge between commercial and small and emerging farmers, it is recommended that a "buddy" system be developed as an integral part of the new food-security policy. This buddy system can be a model in which the commercial, usually white, farmers obtain Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) points[15] for teaming up and forging an alliance with emerging, usually black, farmers.

5.4 MULTI-SECTORALISM

Multi-sectoral collaboration has become an important term. In essence it stems from the need to collaborate and form partnerships, since the nature of the challenge is too large for one single agency or entity to address and resolve. There are many well-documented examples of multi-sectoral approaches to address the HIV epidemic, or to undertake disaster-risk reduction interventions. Food security is another area that requires a multi-sectoral approach since it cuts across the mandate of various line ministries, such as agriculture, health, education, social development and others. The need for collaboration arises from the diverse nature of the problem of food insecurity. The problem has several determinants, affects many people and sectors, and requires action by different sectors. Many sectors are directly or indirectly involved in food security, and it is important for them to collaborate in order to try to influence the likely success of food-security initiatives at the national, regional and international levels.
The benefits of multi-sectoral collaboration are clear, but in reality it is difficult to operate in a truly multi-sectoral manner. One of the first steps is to create a common conceptual understanding of the problems of food security.

On average, there are six different government departments involved in each of the main programmatic priority areas, clearly indicating that food security is a cross- cutting issue. The IFSS has provided for all relevant government departments to participate in the capacity building and dialogue processes, in an attempt to break through the solo approach that is so common in many countries.

Table 4 provides an overview of the multi-sectoral approach in the IFSS.

TABLE 4

Multi-Sectoral Approach in the IFSS

Pillar	Multi-sectoral approach
1. Production and trading	**Lead: Department of Agriculture** Cluster: Departments of Land Affairs, Health, Public Works, Water Affairs and Forestry, Trade and Industry
2. Income opportunities	**Lead: Department of Trade and Industry** Cluster: Departments of Agriculture, Public Works, Water Affairs and Forestry, Minerals and Energy, Public Enterprises, Transport and Communications
3. Nutrition and food safety	**Lead: Department of Health** Cluster: Departments of Agriculture, Water Affairs and Forestry, and Trade and Industry
4. Safety nets and food emergencies	**Lead: Department of Social Development and Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs** Cluster: Departments of Agriculture, Public Works, and Water Affairs and Forestry

5.4.1 Multi-Sectoralism: Challenges and Achievements

The IFSS is based on a multi-sectoral approach stemming from a realisation of the complexity of food-security issues. This approach requires cooperation from all spheres of government, and the active participation of the private sector and civil society. To this end, several important players from national and provincial governments, public agencies, universities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based associations were involved in developing the IFSS, with the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs (MALA) taking the lead. The absence of the corporate sector from the policy's development is striking. The intention was to involve a range of sectors, including: agricultural production and imports to achieve food supply at various levels; production and marketing to make food available; and education linked to production and marketing, and to good food choices. All of these were consolidated by a range of government programmes designed to improve access to, and the availability of, food at different scales (Drimie and Garrett, 2009).

Achievement: Commitment to a consultative process, at least on paper, which is an important first step

Recognising the need for rapid change and delivery, the IFSS policy development process did provide a clear framework to guide stakeholders in their work. Food security was identified as one of the priority areas requiring urgent attention and, given the particular nature of the South African economy, it was understood that food security was a multi-disciplinary issue, which required a policy framework that extended beyond the confines of agriculture. The IFSS institutional arrangements reflect an innovative blend of interventions and mechanisms (Hart, 2009). The basic principles of these arrangements follow guidelines of "inclusivity" and integration of programme leaders (IFSS, 2002). The structure provides for a range of functions and activities that are integrated to accommodate delivery line mandate, advisory as well as coordination.

In general, few organisations or governments have successfully developed and managed all the elements required to implement a multi-sectoral programme. But the complex and multidimensional nature of food security makes it clear that a multi-sectoral approach remains valid. The reality is that, even if policies and strategies are conceived as multi-sectoral, operationally, programmes must be run by vertically structured institutions or at least along sectoral lines. Despite the commitment in spirit to a consultative process, the IFSS does not provide a clear framework for the required approach; this is left largely to different tiers of government to decide. It is a notable challenge when each department reverts to its line function and budget reporting. This spurs confusion about how systematic integration—leading to cooperative goal definition, planning and action—will emerge. There are deep institutional barriers to successfully managing the actions from policy to implementation, a situation that is exacerbated by the weak links between the government, the private sector and civil society (HSRC, 2009).

The multi-sectoral nature of the IFSS is well documented, but in reality many of the coordination efforts are not effective and the major contributing factor could be the conceptual challenges in the area of food security.

5.4.1.1 Conceptual Challenges

The complex nature of the food-security problem in South Africa results in various policy challenges related to the many players and perspectives involved. The people involved see things very differently, and perspectives can become polarised, making it difficult to find solutions to the challenges of food security. People not only think differently about the causes of the problem, but also about the level at which to resolve it. Views range from seeing aspects of the national and international systems, such as unfair trade practices, as causes of food insecurity, to problems at the individual or household level, or problems with South Africa's food and agricultural system, from production to marketing and processing (Drimie and Garrett, 2009). These gaps in understanding prevent policymakers from effectively addressing food insecurity and from identifying appropriate interventions to different situations and different needs (HSRC, 2009).

The conceptual challenges are even more evident when one reviews and analyses the origins of the country's food-security policy framework. Following the election of the democratic government in 1994, the new ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), embarked on a period of addressing inequalities created during apartheid, including actions in the field of rural development and food security (Kole, 2005). This led to the creation of the Rural Development Programme (RDP), which interestingly also addresses urban economic development. The process resulted in a broadly supported understanding that rural development had to become part of the general development agenda. Ultimately, the RDP sought to overcome the overall service-delivery imbalances created by apartheid (Kole, 2005).

The strategic framework for action to achieve food security was first outlined in the 1994 RDP, which identified food security as a basic human need. A few years earlier, the trade unions and civil society began to develop a plan for social transformation, which was needed for the inevitable arrival of post-apartheid South Africa. The process involved extensive consultations and resulted, in 1994, in the RDP, which sought to address several social and economic problems. A key aspect of the RDP was that it linked reconstruction with development (and therefore the RDP has a multi-sectoral approach) and recognised that problems

(lack of housing, food insecurity, unemployment, inadequate education and healthcare, and a failing economy) are interconnected (ANC, 1994). The RDP mentions poverty and food insecurity as the legacy of the apartheid socioeconomic and political order (IFSS, 2002), and was based on the following principles (Kole, 2005):

- meeting basic needs, including food;
- building the economy;
- developing infrastructure;
- promoting peace and stability; and
- promoting human-resource development

The 1994 White Paper on Reconstruction and Development (Kole, 2005) identified several priority presidential lead projects and specified lead departments. The projects that were relevant to food security are listed in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Food-Security Projects in the 1994 White Paper

Project	Lead department
Water provision	Water Affairs and Forestry
Land reform	Land Affairs
Land redistribution and restitution	Land Affairs
Small-scale farmer development[16]	Agriculture

This initial step towards coordination and multi-sectoral policy development resulted in various government departments and associated entities undertaking a multitude of sector-related programmes and projects. Although there was progress on delivery, that progress was unsustainable because there was no coordination and no proper consultation with beneficiaries to ascertain their needs. In most cases, moreover, development efforts were duplicated. This resulted in what some viewed as "competition" between government departments, as the activities of the different departments undermined each other's efforts (Kole, 2005).

One year later, in 1995, the government introduced a rural development strategy led by the Department of Land Affairs. The strategy aimed to create greater equality in the use of resources in rural areas, especially land, through tenure security, restitution and reform programmes. Analysis of this strategy indicates that the main priority is infrastructure in rural areas (Bannister, 2000).

Since the 1996 World Food Summit, the government has expressed its commitment to creating a policy environment conducive to coordinated action, addressing the multiple layers of food insecurity in the country (Drimie and Garrett, 2009).

In 1997, the RDP office developed a more comprehensive strategy known as the Rural Development Framework. This seeks to broaden the multi-sectoral approach and include other departments' rural development programmes. The government saw it as more of a status quo document than a new strategy. After the closure of the RDP office later that year, the framework was passed to the Department of Land Affairs for finalisation. With no ownership in the Department of Land Affairs, however, the document was passed as a framework document without any legal status (Kole, 2005). The closure of the RDP office was a practical manifestation of a major policy shift that was coming swiftly: the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR). This macroeconomic strategy has dominated the policymaking agenda ever since (Reynolds, 1999).

In 2000, the presidency instituted the new Integrated Governance System, whereby government departments were teamed into clusters.[17] These are accountable to the cabinet in a collective manner, not as individual departments, thus fostering inter-governmental and intra-governmental relations. This process contributed to the development of the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme (ISRDP) and the IFSS, since it brought together all departments with a similar mandate and interest. The ISRDP is a separate policy framework aimed mainly at creating a blueprint for concerted efforts towards rural development in South Africa. The ISRDS aims to make rural development sustainable through economic improvement, the provision of social amenities and the establishment of viable institutions (ISRDS, November 2000). To be implemented, the ISRDS was turned into the ISRDP but the strategy became a programme without accompanying documentation that either simplified or clarified the strategy or programme. As a result, the strategy remains the key document regarding the ISRDP. At its heart, the ISRDS is centred around a simple idea: that local, demand-driven development in the context of empowered local government should provide the pivot around which sectoral departmental delivery would be coordinated, resulting in a more integrated (and responsive) development. The ISRDS was not a stand-alone programme, but rather a mechanism for working differently. The ISRDP, like the IFSS has no budget, since its work is to improve coordination of existing expenditure and delivery (Everatt et al., 2004).

South Africa's food security framework was further defined and refined in various policy papers, such as the Agriculture White Paper (1995), the Broadening of Access to Agriculture Trust (BATAT) and the 1997 Agriculture Discussion Paper. The various policy directions and priorities outlined in these documents were consolidated and updated in the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme (ISRDP, 1999).

During the 1999 State of the Nation Address, Thabo Mbeki announced the creation of a new strategy to supplement the RDP (Mbeki, 1999). The ISRDS was based on the following key elements (Government, 2000):

- Integration: the coordination of efforts at local-government level through Integrated Development Plans (IDPs).
- Rural development: multidimensional, including an improvement in the provision of services and enhanced local economic growth.
- Sustainability: this contributes to local growth and includes local participation and ownership.
- The existence of growth dynamics in rural areas.
- The existence of rural safety nets as an integral part of the ISRDS.

The ISRDS was developed to address the uncoordinated and unsustainable efforts launched under the RDP. Community and stakeholder participation was minimal (Kole, 2005). This is a challenge that keeps filtering through most programmes, policies and strategies aimed at rural development and food security.

In 2000, the cabinet decided to launch an updated national food-security strategy. This led to the cabinet's adoption of the IFSS in 2002, with the aim of integrating and harmonising the various food-security programmes under the control of different government departments, within the policies and strategies described above. From the outset, food security is recognised as a complex issue, and the heart of the framework is built around the need for a comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach by all spheres of government, combined with the participation of academia and civil society (IFSS, 2002). Despite the overwhelming evidence that the cause of hunger and malnutrition in South Africa is not overall food shortages, but access to food by certain parts of the population, a deeply rooted perception persists among many stakeholders that food security is about agricultural production. To date, however, the IFSS is the most comprehensive public response to food insecurity developed by government (Drimie and Garrett, 2009).

5.4.1.2 Recommendation to Overcome the Challenge

Conceptual differences are not easily resolved, and different viewpoints and visions must also be included as they enrich the discussion and policy framework. A different viewpoint is not automatically wrong, but consensus building is pivotal to create that critical mass needed to start moving a policy into effective implementation.

The process and recommendations outlined earlier to help tackle the challenges of measuring food security might also help solve the conceptual challenge. It is recommended that a thorough and participatory process be initiated, including stakeholders from all spheres of government, NGOs, academia, the private sector, the media and the public, to identify a target for food security. Done properly, this process will automatically include consensus building on the definitions of food security, and will inform the focus and priorities of the food-security policy. During the round table discussion, participants made a strong call to keep the focus of the policy simple and achievable, and suggested that it centre on food availability at the household level.

It became evident from contacts with the Department of Agriculture that the drafting of the new food-security policy is at quite an advanced stage and that it will soon be shared with a selected group of external stakeholders for their inputs and feedback. But the consultation process is not as open and transparent as it could be, and feedback will be sought mainly from academics and only for certain parts of the new policy.

This could entail missing an important opportunity to build the crucial consensus on what is meant by food security in South Africa, and to resolve the measurement and conceptual challenges.

5.5 SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

According to the IFSS, one of the fundamental obstacles to targeting and effectively delivering food-security initiatives is the lack of institutional capacity and accountability of officials in poor areas. This is particularly the case in rural areas, where a lack of representation, training

and institutions makes it challenging for poor people to put their interests forward, to find out about available resources, or to interact fully with service providers. On the other hand, lack of institutional capacity and insufficient coordination make it difficult for government structures, NGOs and others to channel their interventions towards the vulnerable and to monitor the effects of those interventions (IFSS, 2002).

In theory, the IFSS structure follows on the guidelines of inclusivity and integration of programme leaders. The structure provides for a range of officials whose activities are integrated to accommodate delivery line mandate, advisory (monitoring and setting objectives), as well as coordination. The structure is also compatible with the three levels of government (IFSS, 2002).

At the highest level of the structure is the Inter-Ministerial Committee composed of two clusters, social and economic. The Minister of Agriculture will chair the team and the team's role is to give a political direction by making policy decisions and reporting to the president and to parliament about progress. Stakeholders from the public sector, the private sector and civil society are meant to form the National Food Security Forum (NFSF). This is supposed to give strategic leadership and to advise on food security. It will also set standards and recommend policy options (IFSS, 2002). To date, however, the NFSF has not come together in its mandated form or shape; this will be discussed below.

The National Coordinating Unit (NCU) is supposed to be the technical support unit in the Department of Agriculture. The NCU will be responsible for coordinating the activities of the IFSS. It will coordinate the activities of National Programme Managers from national departments, who will oversee specific programmes. The activities of the line functions will be linked to the NCU on the basis of food security. The unit will also coordinate the activities of provincial food-security coordinators (IFSS, 2002).

5.5.1 Social Accountability and Participation: Challenges and Achievements

Current political support for food security is high. The reasons for this vary, but many analysts agree that the ruling party needs the political support and votes of the white farmers to maintain a healthy and successful tripartite alliance between the ANC, trade unions and the Communist Party. Hence, politicising agriculture and food security has resulted in high political support for both these national priorities.

Achievement: strong political commitment

Food security is a national policy priority in South Africa.

The ANC's "Freedom Charter" says: "rent and prices shall be lowered; food plentiful and no one shall go hungry". The pursuit of household and national food security is a constitutional mandate of the ANC government. The political will is present to create an environment that ensures that adequate food is available to all, now and in the future, and that hunger is eradicated. After the 2009 National Elections, the ANC remained the ruling party and in its election promises it pledged to introduce the following, or to expand and build on areas where they already exist in some form (ANC, 2009):

- Expand an emergency food-relief programme on a mass scale in the form of food-assistance projects for the poorest households and communities through partnerships with religious and other community organisations.
- In the next five years (up to 2014) the government will also introduce a "food for all" programme to acquire and distribute basic foods at affordable prices to poor households and communities. The government will take steps to acquire and promote food production and security as the way to lessen the country's dependence on food imports. This will be linked to the "food for all" programme. The government will develop an appropriate institutional approach to implement this programme.
- The government will expand access to food production schemes in rural and peri-urban areas so that residents of those areas can grow their own food with implements, tractors, fertilisers and pesticides. Other government measures will support existing community schemes that use land for food production in schools, healthcare facilities, churches, and urban and traditional-authority areas.
- The government will expand and introduce new measures to improve the agro-processing logistics of food distribution such as transportation, warehousing, procurement and outsourcing in order to reduce food prices in the long term.
- The government will continue to enforce stronger measures to act against food cartels and collusions that inflate food prices.

The multi-sectoral approach that is so much part of the IFSS, and the processes of stakeholder dialogue and capacity building, suggest that there is ample participation by stakeholders in the IFSS policy framework. However, although there are several strong players influencing the direction and implementation of the IFSS, engagement and social accountability is not structured or systematic. The IFSS sets out a series of strategic issues around participation aimed at fostering cooperation among the government, parastatals and NGOs. Various stakeholders will comprise the National Food Security Forum, which is tasked with giving strategic leadership and advice on food security. Furthermore, it will set standards and recommend policy options. Ideally, this forum provides the entry point for participation and a system for social accountability.

Several years later, however, the National Food Security Forum is still to be formally constituted so as to provide a basis for a formal engagement between the government and civil society that will enable them to debate and share information on key aspects of food insecurity and vulnerability (Tapscott, 2006). A review of the institutional arrangements in 2006 revealed a "plethora of organisations engaged in food security and nutrition work in the South and the Southern African region", many of which "possess a wealth of information about the locality of vulnerable groups and the types of food insecurity which they face" (Tapscott, 2006). Many of the activities of these civil-society organisations are not well integrated, and the flow of information between them and the government is erratic at best. An important factor in the weakness of civil-society engagement in policymaking "has been the marginalisation of members of civil society in the development and implementation of policies relating to food

security" (Tapscott, 2006). Leadership challenges are often mentioned as the main reason for weak performance in the area of participation and social accountability.

5.5.1.1 Leadership Challenges

Although the right to food is a constitutional entitlement, there are signs of a lack of political leadership to stimulate a sense of urgency to solve the problem and to open up space for dialogue. Agencies continue to attempt to preserve their autonomy. And there are conflicts among varying institutional goals, bureaucratic routines, or technical understanding. The lack of leadership has resulted in a lack of creativity, capacity, resources and incentives. A report on a regional conference on enhancing "Civil Society Participation in SADC Food Security", cited by Tapscott, concludes that an integral component of policymaking has been lacking:

> "Policy should thus be viewed as a cycle of development, implementation, reviewing impacts and learning, and re-developing or changing as necessary. Integral to this cycle is the issue of participation; mechanisms that will allow interfaces with civil society and other stakeholders to engage at all stages of the policy cycle in order to enhance the relevance and success of national and regional policies pertaining to food security. In essence, the participation of civil society in policy implementation, and review is indispensable in building the region's future food security." (Drimie and Misselhorn, 2005, cited in Tapscott, 2006).

5.5.1.2 Recommendation to Overcome the Challenge

The need for a public forum to promote engagement between the players in the area of food security was recognised in the IFSS, which proposed that "stakeholders from public sector, private sector and civil society will constitute the National Food Security Forum. The Forum will give strategic leadership and advisory service on food security, set standards and recommend policy options" (IFSS, 2002).

Furthermore, the educational campaign aimed at raising the profile of food security among different spheres of government should be extended to a general public awareness campaign, aimed at empowering people to claim their right to food and hold the government accountable to its electoral promises and promoting good governance and democratic principles.

6 SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following tables provides an overview of the main challenges in each of the thematic areas and the recommendation to overcome those challenges.

The Right to Food

Challenge	Recommendation
Legislative challenge: legislation, which clearly defines the authority and responsibility, organisational structure and working procedures of the inter-ministerial committee responsible for implementing the IFSS and its stakeholders is absent.	Finalise the policymaking process for a food-security policy as soon as possible. The policy will provide a solid foundation for the subsequent food-security bill, which in turn will legalise the right to food.
Measurement challenge: there is no specific and accepted measure of food insecurity and no standardised way of monitoring it. Moreover, food security is multidimensional and changes often over time, making it almost a moving target for which it is difficult to design accurate measurements and policy targets.	A robust food-security monitoring and evaluation system should be developed, with an identified and agreed upon target for food security. • Invest in further research and policy support to refine the food security benchmark. • Investigate options to enable low-income and food-insecure households to access nutritionally adequate food. • Develop an acceptable and context-specific definition of food security, tailor-made to the situation in South Africa.

Food Access

Challenge	Recommendation
Financial challenge: there is uncertainty about the financial resources available to tackle food insecurity in general and the IFSS in particular.	Develop a financial and accounting system to track the spending of resources on food-security actions and interventions. Furthermore, it is recommended that a central fund be made available to ensure alignment between the separate line ministries' functions.
Institutional home challenge: the responsibility for the IFSS has been allocated to a directorate that is "institutionally weak", with no real ability to compel other directorates, or other government departments, to fall into line around the strategy.	The new food-security policy should be hosted within the National Planning Commission, the advisory body responsible for devising the country's development plans and policies.
Human resource challenge: implementing the IFSS requires skilled people to ensure that the desired outcomes are achieved within the prevailing policy and legislative framework. According to many development analysts in South Africa, the primary constraint is not money, but human capacity.	Develop a management- and leadership-development programme for the food-security and agricultural sector.

Agricultural Support

Challenge	Recommendation
Land reform challenge: market access is lacking for the emerging farmers, and agriculture extensions services are needed to underpin and support the land reform process and the new farmers. But there are serious human-resource constraints for these so-called "food soldiers".	• Adjustment assistance by extension staff should be seen as an inherent component of land reform and should receive the necessary priority and investment. • Proper selection and follow-up of beneficiaries is crucial for land reform to develop sustainable commercial farming.

Multi-Sectoralism

Challenge	Recommendation
Conceptual challenge: The complex nature of the food-security problem in South Africa results in various policy challenges related to the many players and many perspectives involved. The people involved see things very differently, and perspectives can become polarised, making it difficult to find solutions to the challenges of food security.	Initiate a thorough and participatory process, including stakeholders from all spheres of government, NGOs, academia, the private sector, media and the public to identify a target for food security. Done properly, this process will automatically include consensus building on the definitions of food security and will inform the focus and priorities of the food security policy.

Social Accountability and Participation

Challenge	Recommendation
Leadership challenge: the lack of leadership has resulted in a lack of creativity, capacity, resources and incentives. One of the reasons for weak participation in the food-security policy framework has been the marginalisation of members of civil society in the development and implementation of policies relating to food security.	• Create a public forum to promote engagement between players in the field of food security, and revitalise the food-security forum. • Start an awareness and educational programme for the general public aimed at empowering people to claim their right to food.

7 CLOSING REMARK

In conclusion, it is clear that the IFSS has been a major step forward and incorporates a range of innovative approaches intended to facilitate a multi-sectoral approach to food insecurity. Despite the systematic response that the IFSS attempts to create, however, several serious challenges facing its effective implementation have been pointed out.

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NOTES

1. The HDI provides a composite measure of three dimensions of human development: living a long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy); being educated (measured by adult literacy and gross enrolment in education); and having a decent standard of living (measured by purchasing power parity and income).

2. Emerging farmers are those who benefitted from the national land reform process through the Comprehensive Agriculture Support Programme (CASP).

3. The budget in local currency is R860 million and the exchange rate of R7.19 for 1 US$ is applied throughout this report.

4. There is overlap between the different categories because some beneficiaries are both young and women, for instance, resulting in a double count for the different categories.

5. In order to implement food-security programmes, policymakers at all levels of government require much information on the conditions of food demand and supply in different parts of the country. This information can be used to identify risky and vulnerable areas with respect to food access and use. When the IFSS was drafted, however, South Africa did not have a structured system of dealing with food-security disasters, such as droughts or floods. These disasters, which occur regularly, can substantially threaten the food-security position of agriculture-based households. With few reserves to draw on, these households are hit hard by crop failure and asset loss.

6. This proposal is provided by the FIAN International Working Paper by Rolf Künnemann, Kofi Yakpo, Sabine Pabst and Martin Wolpold-Bosien and was prepared for the Department of Agriculture as preparation for the food-security bill in 2001. The process stalled for unknown reasons, but renewed interest in the right to food will stimulate the debates again.

7. The Food Security Round Table was organised as part of the methodology for completing this report on the food-security policy framework in South Africa. The meeting took place on 5 August 2010 and was a facilitated brainstorm with a few selected people. It sought to generate discussion and debate on the food-security policy framework, with the goal of capturing challenges, achievements, recommendations and innovations.

8. The method is based on the idea that the experience of food insecurity (access) causes predictable reactions and responses that can be captured and quantified through a survey and summarised in a scale. The questionnaire captures: feelings of uncertainty or anxiety over food (situation, resources or supply); perceptions that food is of insufficient quantity (for adults and children); perceptions that food is of insufficient quality (includes aspects of dietary diversity, nutritional adequacy, preference); reported reductions of food intake (for adults and children); reported consequences of reduced food intake (for adults and children); and feelings of shame for resorting to socially unacceptable means to obtain food resources (Coates, 2007)

9. Prices and income are all based on 1996 prices and the rand-dollar exchange rate was 5:1 in 1996.

10. The Bushveld is a subtropical woodland eco-region in southern Africa that encompasses most of the Limpopo Province and part of the North West Province of South Africa, and extends into western Botswana and southern Zimbabwe.

11. Agri South Africa (AgriSA) is an agricultural trade association in South Africa. It is a federal organisation which promotes, on behalf of its members, the sustainable profitability and stability of commercial agricultural producers and agribusinesses through its involvement and input on a national and international level. It represents more than 70,000 small and large-scale commercial farmers.

12. The beneficiaries of MAFISA include the following: communal farmers and farmers in the transitional stage from subsistence farmers to so-called "beginner farmers", women and youth, emerging farmers, small-scale farmers, small agri-business, farm workers, user-owned self-help groups, community-based organisations involved in agriculture

13. The other product is the equipment loan of US$13500.

14. The Producer Support Estimate (PSE) is an indicator of the annual monetary value of gross transfers from consumers and taxpayers to support agricultural producers, measured at farm-gate level, arising from policy measures, regardless of their nature, objectives or impacts on farm production or income.

15. Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment was initiated by the South African government in response to the deliberate inequalities that had been created by the apartheid regime. It is the economic empowerment of all black people including women, workers, youth, people with disabilities and people living in rural areas, through strategies such as ownership, management, employment equity, skills development, preferential procurement, enterprise development and corporate social investment. Broad-Based BEE is measured by a balanced scorecard that includes scores for direct empowerment, human resources development and indirect empowerment, and in many instances companies—including commercial farms—are obliged to have a "BBEEE" partner to tender for large government contracts.

16. The small-scale farmer development projects under the 1994 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) aimed to respond to demands of land-based communities for small-scale agricultural production, training and support. It also included the development of appropriate training modules, development of mobile training units, and building the capacity of existing institutions to train trainers to serve the sector. In 1994/95 it had a budget of US$1.14 million (at 1995 exchange rates) This programme later evolved into CASP and other types of agriculture and food security programmes described in this paper.

17. The clusters are: governance and administration; social; employment and economic; international relations; peace and security; and justice and crime-prevention. Issues of food security are managed by the social cluster but are addressed by several.

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