

ROSA Newsletter

Zoom

Improving nutrition through key thematic areas: Towards an integrated approach for EU action

The European Union and its Member States have recently adopted several policy frameworks reflecting their increased commitment to fighting undernutrition. The EU Communications on food security, humanitarian food assistance and global health¹ take the first steps towards a common framework for the EU and its Member States in combating malnutrition. Individual countries have also launched their own programmes and strategies². To support on-going efforts, an **EU reference document on nutrition³** was published in September 2011. This practical document highlights concrete steps to translate political commitments into action. It promotes an integrated and multi-sectoral approach, by providing guidance for the practical incorporation of nutrition objectives into the relevant sectors and various funding modalities used by the EU.

Based on the reference document, this special issue of the ROSA Newsletter discusses how nutrition benefits can be realised by adapting the design of programmes in all relevant sectors and thematic areas – from health to social protection, agriculture to water and sanitation – and by choosing appropriate indicators to monitor progress. The second part of the article focuses on the agricultural sector. It identifies possible intervention entry points and key outcome indicators. Several case studies are presented to illustrate feasibility.

¹ COM(2010)126 final, [Humanitarian Food Assistance](#)
COM(2010)127 final, [An EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges](#)
COM(2010)128 final, [The EU Role in Global Health](#)

² For instance, DFID's strategy (The neglected crisis of undernutrition) and the French government strategy (*Nutrition dans les pays en développement. Document d'orientation stratégique*).

³ European Commission, Addressing Undernutrition in External Assistance. An integrated approach through sectors and aid modalities, Tools and methods series, Reference document No. 13, September 2011.

Strengthening the linkages between nutrition and other relevant sectors

Maternal and child undernutrition are caused by multiple factors operating at different levels⁴: from inadequate policies to income poverty and poor quality diets, from gender discrimination to lack of access to basic services. Given the complex interplay of causes, undernutrition will only be tackled effectively if action is taken in all relevant sectors to address the causes that they can be influenced. Doing so would also result in several other benefits: i) improved relevance, efficiency and effectiveness; ii) increased sustainability, equity and impact of poverty-reduction efforts; iii) less need for emergency aid, and lower social, economic and financial costs of crises, through preventive action; and iv) stimulus to empower all citizens through capacity building for better nutrition integration. These expected benefits can only be realised if they are planned for and included in several thematic areas and sectors.



⁴ Immediate causes relate to individual level and have two dimensions: dietary intake and health status. Underlying causes operate at household and community levels. They comprise three categories: household food security, care for children/women and health environment/services. Basic causes include a range of factors operating at national and/or international level, ranging from social and economic environments to political contexts.

Monitoring progress with nutrition-specific indicators

Nutrition-specific objectives need to be incorporated into the design of assistance programmes. Whichever thematic area or sector is used, it is important to measure the contribution to combating undernutrition.

There are a great many possible indicators. Box 1 presents the most important indicators of nutritional impact, which may be valuable for a range of sectoral approaches. In addition, it is important to assess progress in terms of intended inputs, outputs and outcomes, through nutrition-specific indicators⁵.

Box No. 1: Impact indicators potentially relevant to all aspects of external assistance

- Prevalence of stunting in children aged < 5 years
- Prevalence of underweight in children aged < 5 years
- Prevalence of wasting in children aged < 5 years
- Prevalence of severe acute malnutrition (including oedema) in children < 5 years
- Prevalence of low Mid-Upper Arm Circumference – MUAC (6-59 months)
- Low Birth Weight (LBW) rate
- Prevalence of low BMI (Body Mass Index) in women of reproductive age
- Prevalence of overweight amongst women of reproductive age
- Prevalence of iodine deficiency disorders (IODD)
- Prevalence of vitamin A deficiency among children (2-5 years)
- Prevalence of vitamin A deficiency among pregnant or lactating women
- Prevalence of anaemia in children aged 6-59 months
- Prevalence of anaemia among pregnant women
- Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)
- Infant mortality rate
- Under five mortality rate

⁵ Annex 3 of the reference document provides possible indicators linked to inputs, outputs and outcomes. They are presented by thematic area. Input indicators measure the financial, administrative and regulatory resources provided. Output indicators measure the immediate and concrete consequences of the measures taken and resources used. Outcome indicators measure the results in terms of target group benefits.

Improving nutrition through agriculture

Maximising nutrition benefits from agricultural interventions

In addition to its traditional focus on food and cash-crop production, agriculture has considerable potential to help achieve broader national objectives of reducing poverty and undernutrition. By putting more focus on nutrition outcomes, agriculture can address a critical, recurring constraint: low labour capacity and productivity due, in part, to the poor nutrition status of the agricultural workforce.

Agriculture can improve nutrition in several ways:

- improved diets (quantity and quality) — by increasing household consumption of own food produced and diversifying production;
- reduced income poverty — by selling own produce or agricultural labour/employment — with a potential knock-on effect on the quality of the diet, access to health services and care;
- empowerment of women as income-earners, decision-makers and primary childcare-providers;
- lower food prices for consumers through increased food production and availability;
- higher national revenue, which can be used to improve state services.

Despite the above, the impact of agricultural policies and programmes on nutrition is not always clear. First, agricultural programmes are not necessarily designed with a nutrition objective in mind and are therefore not assessed by that criterion. Second, even those that do have nutrition objectives tend to have mixed results. However, evidence shows that interventions promoting increased production of fruit and vegetables (homestead gardens in particular) and animal food products have considerable potential to address micronutrient deficiencies — not least because such programmes are more likely to include nutrition objectives. This evidence shows gains in production, income, household food security, dietary intake and fewer micronutrient deficiencies as a result of the interventions, especially when combined with other components — education, behaviour change and women's empowerment. Nevertheless, the potential benefits of agricultural programmes that focus on the production of energy-rich staples are also very likely to help reduce undernutrition (such as maternal undernutrition) although there is no evidence of this yet.

Incorporating nutrition indicators into programme design

Box 2 contains indicators that have specific added value to nutrition. They are intended to complement household level food security and agriculture indicators essential to nutrition, such as indicators of purchasing power (context-specific), proportion of food needs met through own production or the proportion of expenditure on food.

Box No. 2: Key indicators of nutrition benefits through food security and agriculture

- Minimum dietary diversity score (6-23 months)
- Individual dietary diversity score (women of reproductive age)
- Consumption of iron-rich or iron-fortified foods (6-23 months)
- Minimum acceptable diet (6-23 months)
- Salt iodisation

Identifying entry points for intervention

Possible entry points for intervention are identified at different levels: i) policies and programmes, ii) conducive natural resource management, and iii) conducive investments and services.

Policies and programmes:

- Inclusion of nutrition objectives and indicators in policies, programmes and projects (cf. Box 3: Applying a nutrition lens to food security projects).
- Design of strong monitoring and assessment systems and reporting on nutrition and food intake/diet quality indicators in addition to production figures and staple food availability.
- Increased collaboration with other sectors and joint programming (e.g. establishing links between agricultural extension and health services for activities such as communication and information systems). This is especially important in emergencies.
- Empowerment of women, strengthening their roles as economic actors and creating an enabling environment for childcare.
- Prioritization of areas or groups most seriously affected by undernutrition.
- Prevention of potential negative impacts on nutrition (e.g. increase in food-borne or water-borne diseases, or in women's workload to the detriment of childcare).

Box No. 3: Applying a nutrition lens to food security projects in Mali

In 2010, the EU Delegation in Mali embarked on an “evaluation, capitalisation and formulation” exercise to improve the quality of its ongoing and upcoming food and nutrition security projects.

The Delegation suggested a five-step process:

- 1. Review literature on food security and nutrition.** Carry out a complete review of specific literature on the link between agriculture/food security and nutrition, internationally and in Mali.
- 2. Undertake a situation analysis including a causal analysis**
- 3. Review the likely impact of existing measures.** Determine the possible impacts on nutrition, raise questions about prerequisites and necessary conditions, assess the relevance of the proposed measure and reinforce the partner's capacity to identify food security action with nutritional impact.
- 4. Develop a guide for good and bad practices based on experience to date.** Support NGOs to analyse in a critical way their implementation method and encourage them to systematically document good and bad practices for every activity using a common methodology.
- 5. Develop a monitoring and assessment system that is mandatory for all projects, including a set of mandatory indicators and optional indicators.** Support the establishment of a joint monitoring and assessment system for future projects to compare their food and nutrition outcomes and determine the most effective measures.

This process highlighted the need for a paradigm shift in the implementation of food security and agriculture projects. Partners should shift from improving household food security to improving the quality of mother's and children's diets.

Conducive natural resource management:

- Securing ownership, access and management rights to land and other productive resources (e.g. water) for poor or marginalised groups (e.g. emergency-affected populations, pastoralists depending on the context).
- Adaptation to the effects of climate change (e.g. to the foreseen reduction in water availability in sub-Saharan Africa).
- Risk mitigation and management of climatic shocks and natural hazards (e.g. droughts, floods, pests).

Conducive investments and services:

- Securing equitable access to financial services for smallholders, including the poor.
- Investment in the production and consumption of fruit and vegetables alongside staple crops.
- Increasing household access to and consumption of animal products through strategic support for the livestock and fishery sectors (cf. Kenya case study).

Box No. 4: An integrated programme to improve diets, food security and livelihoods in Kenya

In the North Eastern Province of Kenya, increasing climatic hazards coupled with conflicts and displacements have a devastating impact on local livelihoods. Destitute herders that have lost their animals turn to casual labour or petty trading. These dramatic changes result in loss of direct access to animal products and lower purchasing power, thereby having a serious impact on family diets. In this context two NGOs with specific expertise and longstanding experience in the region (Vétérinaires Sans Frontières, on pastoralism and markets, and Save the Children, on nutrition and voucher systems) combined their efforts.

A series of initial assessments led the design of an integrated programme that brought together nutrition, health, food security and rural development. The aim was to diversify children's diets through a voucher system while also supporting the local economy. The vouchers are exchanged in local markets for milk, meat products and beans.

Overall the programme succeeded in:

- a) increasing consumption of protein-rich food among vulnerable households and their children through vouchers, combined nutrition education, training in child feeding and care practices;
- b) supporting the local economy by increasing the income of pastoral households and through direct support for their production and marketing systems (training on milk management, husbandry, support for animal health services, enhanced fodder production, etc.); and,
- c) improving the overall availability and quality of animal products in local markets which contributed, among others, to extend the shelf life and hygiene conditions of safer milk products, thereby improving the economic returns earned by traders (including women traders).

- Increase of the productivity of small-scale farming through good agricultural practice (e.g. improving soil fertility, control of soil erosion, water conservation).
- Support for storage and processing methods to reduce post-harvest losses and increase profit margins.
- Fortification of basic foods, including bio-fortification (cf. Nigeria case study).

Box No. 5: Public-private partnership in fortification programmes in Nigeria

Prior to 1993, Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD) was recognised as a public health problem in Nigeria. Following a series of international summits, meetings and resolutions, Nigeria launched its universal salt iodisation (USI) programme, deriving momentum from three key success factors: political commitment by the government, commitment by the salt industry, and an effective multisectoral partnership. In 1993, the USI law was enacted and made mandatory in Nigeria.

Within five years, household access to adequately iodised salt rose from 0% in 1993 to 98% by 1998. The overall success of its salt iodisation programme made Nigeria into the first country in Africa to achieve USI compliance in 2005, as recognised by the Network for Sustained Elimination of Iodine Deficiency. Based on its positive experience with USI, Nigeria has moved beyond salt iodisation and now fortifies a range of staple foods with Vitamin A.

Key challenges to strengthen linkages between agriculture and nutrition

Agriculture can and should be an effective way to improve nutrition. The sector should therefore consistently incorporate nutrition indicators in programme design, and nutrition criteria in assessments. Nutrition training and awareness-raising is necessary for agricultural workers and decision-makers to understand the links between agriculture and nutrition and work towards achieving them.

Comments, questions and suggestions on the concept note are welcomed and should be sent to EuropeAid at the following e-mail addresses: DEVCO-NUTRITION-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu and/or Heloise.TROC@ec.europa.eu

Views on current news

For a dedicated work programme on agriculture at the Durban climate talks

The 17th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP17) will be held in Durban, South Africa, from 28 November to 9 December 2011. The negotiations at COP17 will seek to advance the implementation of the Cancun Agreements, agreed upon in December 2010 at COP16 in Cancun. They will also discuss the broader issues addressed under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and discuss the future of the Kyoto Protocol.

In this interview, Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda⁶ (Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network) presents FANRPAN's position and activities for COP17.

What are your expectations for COP17 regarding agriculture and food security?

Food security is at the top of the global agenda. Staple prices, especially maize and wheat are rising and becoming extremely volatile. Price volatility may increase in the future, since the effects of climate change are likely to increase uncertainty and instability of food production. In this context, we need a global deal on climate change that safeguards agriculture and food security.

Therefore, we ask for the adoption of a dedicated work programme on agriculture in Durban. This programme should not solely address emission reductions in the agriculture sector. It should also help smallholder farmers, especially in Africa, adapt to climate change. African agriculture, mostly small-holder farming, is indeed particularly vulnerable to climate change. In particular, this programme should focus on climate smart agriculture, i.e. an agriculture that lowers emissions, but also increases productivity, adaptive capacities and improves the resilience of ecosystems and farmers' livelihoods. Currently, this change cannot happen.

How are agriculture and food security currently discussed in the climate change negotiations?

The international climate change negotiations have not been able to address the relationship between climate change and agriculture in a smart way. They put emphasis on emissions mitigation in the agriculture sector, to the detriment of adaptation. Agriculture has been included in the "Sectoral Approaches" section of the negotiating text, along with emissions reduction in the aviation sector for instance.

This poses two challenges. First, when no agreement is reached among Parties on other sectoral approaches, agriculture is excluded from the decision text like other sectors. This happened in Cancun. Second, this approach does not allow negotiators to address agriculture as a special sector, especially regarding adaptation and food security. Therefore, in Durban, we ask for recognition of agriculture as a special sector. This requires the adoption of a dedicated work programme on agriculture that addresses both climate change mitigation and adaptation.

How was the recent Johannesburg Ministerial Conference on agriculture and climate change⁷ an important step?

African (mainly agriculture) Ministers met in mid-September in Johannesburg for a high-level conference on climate change and agriculture. The main outcome of this meeting is a joint declaration in which African Ministers ask for a dedicated work programme on agriculture as a special sector, and endorse the need to promote climate smart agriculture. The African Ministerial Conference on Environment⁸ that took place at the same moment confirmed this position. African ministers will be speaking in one single voice in Durban.

Climate smart agriculture is not being discussed in the global South only. Both the North and the South are mobilised on this issue. A Global Science Conference on Climate - Smart Agriculture⁹ recently took place in the

⁶ She has held the position of chief executive officer of FANRPAN since 2004. She is currently coordinating policy research and advocacy programs in 16 African countries, all aimed at making Africa a food-secure region. In 2009, Dr. Sibanda led the "No-Agriculture, No-Deal" global campaign and mobilised African civil society organisations to push for the inclusion of agriculture in the UNFCCC negotiations. She has also been involved with the Farming First Global Campaign, advocating for a holistic approach to sustainable agricultural development since 2008.

⁷ <http://www.nda.agric.za/index2011ClimateChange.htm>

⁸ The African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) is a permanent forum where African ministers of the environment discuss mainly matters of relevance to the environment of the continent. The last meeting was held in Bamako, Mali, on 12-16 September 2011.

⁹ 24-26 October 2011. For more information on the Conference and related issues: <http://www.gscsa2011.org/>.

Netherlands. Issues under discussion included the need for a dedicated work programme on agriculture in Durban, financial needs and sources, and key technology and technology-transfer needs to promote climate-smart agriculture globally, with regard to both mitigation and adaptation and taking into account the needs of smallholder farmers.

What is FANRPAN planning for Durban?

Many of FANRPAN activities for Durban are communication activities. Before COP17, we are ensuring that civil society, i.e. non-state actors (including small-holder farmers), are equipped with sufficient knowledge and understand the dynamics of climate change mitigation and adaptation. We have noticed that civil society tends to oppose their governments on issues debated in the climate change negotiations, especially with regard to agriculture. We think that there should be a real policy dialogue instead between civil society and government actors on those issues. FANRPAN also believes in the crucial role of the media. We are training journalists on the international negotiations so that they can come to COP17 and inform civil

society on the position of African negotiators. This will help encourage African negotiators to share their position with their constituencies - farmers and the general public - and hold those negotiators accountable.

During the conference, we will report on day-to-day progress in the negotiations and will make sure our negotiators are on board. We will also backstop them with expert information and advice. We will be present at the 3rd Agriculture and Rural Development Day, to be held on 3rd December 2011 in parallel with the negotiations.

Finally, FANRPAN will communicate on COP17 outcomes. This will also help hold negotiators accountable for what they discussed in the negotiations.

If we reach a deal which does not help Africa, and particularly African farmers adapt to climate change challenges, it means we are threatening livelihoods and closing out some countries that will not have enough resources and food. To us, no dedicated work programme on agriculture means no deal in Durban.

Agenda

Past events

- **37th session of the Committee on World Food Security** (Rome, 17-22 October): The CFS37 was a success on the issue of gender as it led to ambitious commitments. Discussions on the Voluntary Guidelines for the responsible governance of land tenure and other natural resources could not be finalised and will resume at a later date. Conclusions on price volatility were limited. [>>>](#)
- **UK launch of the report "Escaping the hunger cycle. Pathways to resilience in the Sahel"** (London, 21 October): Just after World Food Day, this event launched this new report commissioned by the Sahel Working Group. During the event, the author of the report, Peter Gubbels, gave a brief overview of the study's main findings. Then the discussants on the panel picked up on different points within the report. A video of this event (questions and discussion) is available on ODI's website [>>>](#)

- **World Food Day 2011** (16 October): "Food prices - from crisis to stability," was chosen as the World Food Day theme for 2011. Food volatility was put at the centre stage because it threatens the food security of millions of people. [>>>](#)
- **Conference on "Climate-smart agriculture: Africa. A call to action"** (Johannesburg, 13-14 September): Discussions focused on learning from country strategies, financing climate-smart agriculture, and agriculture within the UN climate negotiations. The conference was organised by the South African government (host of the UN Climate talks at the end of November) with the support of the African Union, the FAO and the World Bank. The Conference concluded with the adoption of the Johannesburg Communiqué, which underscores the need to put climate-smart agriculture high on the political agenda. [>>>](#)

Forthcoming events

- **3-4 November:** G20 Summit – Cannes (France)
- **24-25 November:** Expert roundtable on agrofuels convened by UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food – Brussels (Belgium)
- **28 November-9 December:** 17th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (COP 17) - Durban (South Africa)
- **3 December:** Agriculture and Rural Development Day at COP17 – Durban (South Africa)
- **8-10 December:** Meeting of the Food crises prevention network - Cape Verde
- **17-19 January 2012:** International Scientific Symposium on food and nutrition security information. From valid measurement to effective decision-making – Rome (Italy) [>>>](#)

For further information: [Upcoming events](#)

EC's latest news

- **“Increasing the impact of EU development policy and the future approach to budget support” Conference** (18 October, Brussels): Andris Piebalgs, European Commissioner for Development participated to this conference and talked about the future of development policy and budget support. After recalling the challenges ahead and the EU's ODA objectives, he talked about the 3 key areas of EU development policy: governance, inclusive and sustainable growth, and delivery and results on the ground. [>>>](#)
- **Food security thematic programme in Madagascar:** The Delegation of the EU in Madagascar launched a call for proposals last October, under the LRRD component of the FSTP 2011-2013. It aims to support projects that: i) contribute to increase food availability by increasing crop yields, promoting adequate and diversified food crops and improving access to food markets and ii) prevent/address undernutrition among vulnerable groups in areas affected by chronic food insecurity. [>>>](#)
- **EC training “Acting in transition”:** A summary of key points from the training is available on-line. [>>>](#)

ROSA News

New online

➤ Nutrition

Escaping the hunger cycle: Pathways to resilience in the Sahel, Sahel Working Group – September 2011

This report tries to determine how aid could be more effective in reducing vulnerability in the Sahel. It guides decision-makers to strengthen preparedness, early response and rural livelihoods; and emphasise policies on social protection, disaster risk reduction, undernutrition and food price volatility. It analyses changes that have occurred since the 2005 food crisis in policies and programmes in Sahel. It examines whether and how lessons learnt from the 2005 food crisis were taken into account during the 2010 food crisis. [>>>](#)

Malnutrition: Just stop it, ACF – March 2011

Action Against Hunger's annual publication provides an overview of global child and maternal malnutrition in 2010 and 2011. It is aimed at the general public. The report narrates and illustrates the complexities of the problems, issues and policies linked to malnutrition, which is the world's most serious public health problem. In highlighting the role that individuals and organisations can continue to play, the publication outlines successful solutions to end child malnutrition. [>>>](#)

➤ Other themes

FeedinG20, ACF International, CARE International, Helen Keller International, Oxfam, World Vision – 2011

This paper makes a series of recommendations and presents the position of non-governmental and civil society organisations in food-security and nutrition related areas. It is aimed at decision-makers and the general public. These 7 recommendations will be presented to G20 decision-makers for G20 meetings in 2011 and the G20 summit in November 2011. According to this group of NGOs, the G20 must recognise that helping agriculture become sustainable is not only increasing production, but also improving livelihoods and small-holder producers' resilience, in particular women. Any interested organisation can read and sign these recommendations via the website www.feeding20.org, so as to co-ordinate their position on development issues, including food security and nutrition. [>>>](#)

Economics of land degradation. The costs of action versus inaction, IFPRI – 2011

This brief is a presentation of a book entitled: "The Economics of Land Degradation: Toward an Integrated Global Assessment." It calls for policy and research action to resolve the current paradox between high-value land and low investment in land sustainability. According to the authors, inaction in the face of land degradation is primarily the result of limited knowledge of the costs related to land degradation and of insufficient institutional support. The authors identify a number of immediate and underlying causes of land degradation and propose prevention methods. The book also highlights why it is more cost effective to implement prevention methods now than to attempt to treat severely degraded land in the future. They also propose that sustainable land use becomes a key global initiative at the upcoming Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and other forums in 2012. [>>>](#)

➤ External links

ADG News No.27: Smallholder farming cools down the planet – September 2011

ADG News is *Aide au Développement Gembloix*'s news bulletin. This issue presents the advantages of smallholder farming to help fight climate change and ensure food sovereignty. The concepts of climate justice, food sovereignty and family farming are explained and exemplified by ADG's projects in the South. The issue also examines the gender issue in agriculture and the special relationship between women and the environment.

Available in French only: <http://www.ong-adg.be/spip/IMG/pdf/ADG-News-27-v7.pdf>

This bulletin was written by the GRET team in charge of animating ROSA. The network is an initiative of EuropeAid.

The points expressed do not reflect the official position of the European Commission.