



A Way Forward

from the

2020 Africa Conference

Assuring Food and Nutrition Security in Africa by 2020

Prioritizing Actions, Strengthening Actors, and Facilitating Partnerships

Kampala, Uganda • April 1–3, 2004

Introduction

Africa may at last be poised to make real progress on achieving food and nutrition security. Although the number of Africans who are undernourished has been on the rise for decades and now stands at about 200 million people, a new commitment to change has emerged both among African leaders and in the international community. To help determine how to bring about actions that will assure food and nutrition security, the 2020 Vision Initiative of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) facilitated an African-owned and African-driven conference in Kampala, Uganda, on April 1–3, 2004. The conference, “Assuring Food and Nutrition Security in Africa by 2020: Prioritizing Actions, Strengthening Actors, and Facilitating Partnerships,” brought together more than 500 traditional and new actors and stakeholders representing perspectives and experiences from all major sectors across Africa.

This statement on the way forward from the 2020 Africa Conference was developed by the Conference Advisory Committee (CAC), comprising about 35 distinguished African policymakers, civil society leaders, and researchers as well as representatives of cosponsor institutions (CAC members are listed at the end of this document). A draft of this statement was shared with CAC members and participants at the 2020 Africa Conference, and a subcommittee of the CAC then finalized it.

This statement is designed not as an immutable set of instructions, but as a set of guidelines, or a framework, pointing the way toward a food- and nutrition-secure Africa. Your reactions to this statement may be sent to Ms. Rajul Pandya-Lorch (r.pandya-lorch@cgiar.org), conference director and head of the 2020 Vision Initiative. Our hope is that this statement will contribute to the efforts by individuals and institutions to ensure healthy and productive lives for all Africans.

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IN BRIEF

- *Food and nutrition security for Africa must be achieved because it is a human right as well as a moral and socioeconomic imperative.*
- *Food and nutrition security in Africa is receiving renewed attention and commitment, and it is increasingly recognized that the goal can only be achieved with a positive change of attitude, increased investments, and prudent management of resources.*
- *The 2020 Africa Conference is part of a longer-term consultative process on real action toward food and nutrition security in Africa. The steps forward must focus on implementing action and on developing a process of learning and change. Specific “road maps” of change must be developed at regional and country levels, building on existing strategies where appropriate, and facilitated by an organic process. Thus, this statement is not another declaration or another investment plan.*
- *The highest-priority actions are (1) raising agricultural productivity; (2) fostering pro-poor economic growth through improved access to markets, better infrastructure, and greater trade competitiveness; (3) building institutional and human capacity; (4) improving nutrition and health with due attention to HIV/AIDS; and (5) strengthening governance. All of these require added resources, but the benefits of food and nutrition security outweigh the resource needs.*
- *Strengthening actors calls for acknowledging and respecting their diversity, creating windows of opportunity for them to exercise their influence, enhancing their capacity to influence and implement action, and empowering them with information and analysis.*
- *The rights of all who have a stake in achieving food security, especially food-insecure people themselves, must be respected, protected, facilitated, and fulfilled. Without mechanisms for generating improved incentives for good governance and accountability of all actors, no sustainable progress can be expected.*
- *Sharing responsibilities through sound partnerships to achieve food and nutrition security is needed and is promising. African governments, private sector, farmers’ organizations, civil society organizations, and traditional institutions must commit to measurable good governance, pro-poor development policies, and the scaling up of best practices. Rich countries for their part must commit themselves to providing access to their markets, expanded knowledge and technology transfer, and greater financial assistance. Facilitating partnerships calls for mutually agreed upon clear contracts and achievable targets that are enforced and monitored.*
- *Sound decisionmaking and implementation of needed action is possible with capacity, good governance, and strengthened institutions. Implementation must focus on strong government capacity, farmers’ organizations, incentives for the business sector to engage in agriculture and the food industry, consumers’ associations, media, and health systems serving the needs of the poor. As part of good governance, the remaining conflicts on the continent of Africa must be speedily brought to an end if we are to achieve food and nutrition security.*

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BACKGROUND

1. With new political initiatives gaining momentum, there is renewed attention and commitment to Africa's food and nutrition security. The 2020 Africa Conference took place between two seminal events on the continent: the February 2004 African Union Summit on Agriculture and Water and the July 2004 African Union Summit, which will focus attention on cutting hunger by half. By bringing together key traditional and new actors and stakeholders from across the continent, the 2020 Africa Conference offered a unique opportunity to focus on prioritizing actions, strengthening actors, and facilitating partnerships and thereby address implementation constraints.
2. The 2020 Africa Conference is part of a longer-term consultative process on real action toward food and nutrition security in Africa. It brought the various actors together to strengthen implementation. The way forward from the conference must focus on implementing action and on developing a process of change and action, not just on another declaration.

PRIORITIZING ACTIONS

1. **The goals:** The goals are already clearly defined and require no debate. These goals are (a) *assuring food security* (reliable access to food in sufficient quantity and quality for a healthy and productive life for all individuals); and (b) *assuring nutrition security* (where secure access to food is coupled with a sanitary environment, adequate health services, and knowledgeable care to foster good nutritional status through the life cycle and across generations). But the political priority assigned to these goals is deficient, particularly in a world that has doubled per capita incomes in the past 20 years while experiencing growing populations. The actions being taken to reach these goals are incoherent in many countries and are poorly understood by many actors.
2. **The timelines:** Implementing action for achieving food and nutrition security should serve three timelines:
 - Hunger must be halved by 2015 (the Millennium Development Goal, meaning that the proportion of calorie-deficient people is reduced by half by 2015 in each country).
 - The goal must remain ending hunger, not just cutting hunger by half. By 2020 at least, no one should be calorie deficient in Africa.
 - Nutrition security should be achieved step by step. This should include overcoming preventable micronutrient deficiencies of iron, vitamin A, and iodine by 2015. Public health investments and direct nutrition interventions to reduce maternal and child malnutrition (e.g., low birthweight) must be scaled up urgently.

3. **Focusing on people and their problems:** Actions toward food and nutrition security should be prioritized according to their potential for delivering fast and sustainable impact. It makes sense to address worst things first, such as famine and severe hunger related to significant calorie deficiencies. Addressing food and nutrition security directly and indirectly requires recognizing people's problems, situation, and context. Most food- and nutrition-insecure people are in rural areas, and many of their constraints relate to agriculture. Poor African governments must be supported to make the most strategic investments in rural areas and rural communities.
4. **Strategizing and linking goals to means:** The people-focused agenda needs to link the goals to a set of means in an appropriate context. And that context must be addressed when formulating sound "road maps". The agenda must be shaped with input from poor people, who require greater voice and influence. Strategies must build on these basics. Adjusted to context and country, these are the five priority areas of action:
 - a. Strengthen governance and public accountability and end conflicts. If these basics are not met, little can be done for sustainable food and nutrition security.
 - b. Foster macroeconomic growth and stability facilitated by free access to domestic, inter-regional, and international markets and trade; a more cohesive and louder African voice in the World Trade Organization (WTO); better investments in the assets of the poor; more effective management of vulnerability to shocks, including through household, national, and regional food storage; and greater investments in infrastructure to lower transportation and communication costs and encourage rural-urban and intraregional linkages.
 - c. Invest in raising agricultural productivity, especially among small farms, thereby addressing the food availability and income poverty aspects of food and nutrition security within the larger context of policies for agricultural and rural development. The sustainability of agricultural productivity requires strong attention to environment and natural resources, especially soils, watersheds, and biodiversity. Invest in processing for more value addition and quality assurance in the supply chain of agricultural products.
 - d. Invest in pro-poor public health policies and actions, in particular the prevention, control, and management of HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis, to foster food and nutrition security and raise labor productivity.
 - e. Invest in building human capacity by addressing the education needs of women, girls, and boys; upgrading the professional skills of farmers and other rural producers; and meeting the need for higher education to produce better-educated and more-informed actors and stakeholders who can implement actions for nutritional improvement.
5. **Aligning the scale of investments in food and nutrition security with the expected returns:** The search for marginal improvements in food and nutrition security at the lowest cost must be replaced by a focus on the political change and investment needs for getting the job done. Searching for cures to symptoms of food and nutrition insecurity that cost a dollar or two per affected person is unrealistic. For example, preventable low birthweight costs national economies hundreds of dollars per child in lost lifetime earnings. It is important to recognize those levels of potential gains, as they are the proper yardsticks for massive scaling up of public and private investments to address food and nutrition security.

6. **Establishing and strengthening social safety nets:** Effective social safety nets must also be added to help those who would be bypassed or otherwise negatively affected by growth-oriented approaches and also to help households marshal productive assets toward growth. No uniform approach is advocated, but different types of safety nets will be called for in different settings. The success of their implementation will rest, by and large, with governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).
7. **Appreciating Africa's diversity:** Africa's diverse geographical, ecological, social, and economic contexts and institutional strengths offer both challenges and opportunities. Prioritizing actions for food and nutrition security must build on this diversity, which can facilitate learning from within Africa. Different subregional speeds in achieving food and nutrition security for all will contribute to the process of prioritizing actions.

STRENGTHENING ACTORS

1. **Recognizing and respecting the different actors and their comparative strengths:** Many traditional and new actors are influencing food and nutrition security today, including national and local government policymakers, policy advisers, parliamentarians, business leaders, civil society leaders, farmers and farmers' organizations, regional and subregional institutions, international donor agencies, media, and the research community. They often talk different business languages, so improving communication between them is a key priority. Each of these actors requires strengthening but to different degrees in different ways in different countries, and especially in rural areas.
2. **Equipping the actors with influence:** Any strategy for food and nutrition security requires an assessment of the strength of key actors at the outset. A country that has weak business organizations, local governments, community organizations, or farmers' organizations, for instance, needs to invest up front in strengthening this set of actors through appropriate organizational formation, rather than forging ahead just on the basis of a strong central government. Effective prioritization of actions is often done by fruitful, sometimes conflicting, interactions between actors who have access to information and the capacity to articulate. Actors involved in food and nutrition security need to gain more influence.
3. **Facilitating the human rights-based approach:** Strengthening the rights of food-insecure people is an element of improving food and nutrition security. With the judiciary watching over and enforcing the rights of the poor and food insecure, a new set of actors is beginning to come to the table. Civil society and parliamentarians in particular are encouraged to articulate and facilitate rights-based approaches for enhancing food and nutrition security. National institutions are encouraged to monitor the rights of the food insecure.
4. **Building capacity in food and nutrition policymaking and policy assessment for all actors:** This requires accelerated investments in upgrading university education, training for the main groups of actors, and strengthening actors on the job to identify solutions to food and nutrition insecurity.
5. **Empowering actors with information and analysis:** Information is the key to power in addressing food and nutrition security. Information relevant to food and nutrition security needs to be accessible to civil society and the media, not only to government. Information must include analyses (and appropriately simplified communication of related results) on

causes and effects of food and nutrition insecurity and likely outcomes of policy changes and public investments. Continuous education in food and nutrition security should be part of the empowerment process. As farmers' organizations are strengthened and empowered, due consideration should be given to those organizations that serve women farmers.

6. **Mainstreaming gender:** In view of women's roles in African rural development and agriculture and as agents for food and nutrition security, mainstreaming gender through women's empowerment and capacity strengthening must be given priority in the implementation of action. African women must not be deprived of opportunities to exhibit their entrepreneurial talent.
7. **Mobilizing advanced science and relevant technologies to address the food and nutrition problems in Africa:** Hunger and the underlying problems in agriculture, health, and politics must be addressed comprehensively. This is a matter not of conducting studies, but of building, strengthening, and linking Africa's science and technology systems with food and nutrition programs.

FACILITATING PARTNERSHIPS

1. **Developing partnerships:** Partnerships to improve food and nutrition security must be developed to accelerate the mobilization of resources and promote their efficient use. Partnerships that foster synergies between the public interest (such as investment in roads), institutional innovation (such as improved rural banking serving traders and farmers), and civil society (supporting/creating cultures of human rights and mobilizing for public action toward the health conditions that reduce malnutrition) must be supported as priority. But such partnerships must be based on clear targets and contracts and need to have legal bases. Governments have a responsibility to create enabling environments for partnerships and the legal security around them.
2. **Improving coordination among new partners:** A number of new actors have come into play who need to better coordinate their work in partnership to create the synergy needed for success. These actors include leaders from the public sector (central and local government), the private sector, civil society, cultural and religious institutions, as well as lawmakers and others. Currently, partnerships between the public sector and the other players are weak, leading to slow progress.
3. **Moving forward together:** Food and nutrition security is cross-sectoral and involves national and international as well as public and private actors. It therefore requires that teams of actors leap forward together rather than separately. This need applies, for instance, to cooperation between government ministries and between business and civil society organizations working together to address food and nutrition insecurity (such as micronutrient deficiencies). New partnerships are also needed, such as with cultural and religious leaders, to support the food and nutrition security agenda as a societal task. Ending hunger is not just a matter of investment and technology.
4. **Improving the interaction between parliament and the private sector:** In the young democracies in Africa, the interaction between parliament and the business sector is not well developed. The public sector cannot get things done alone. Therefore, for sound lawmaking, the interaction between parliaments and civil society, including business, is essential for effective actions for food and nutrition security.

ADDRESSING IMPLEMENTATION CONSTRAINTS

1. **Implementation test of strategies:** No food and nutrition security strategy, whether at a continental, subregional, national, or local level, is viable if it does not include a well-developed and well-articulated implementation framework.
2. **The responsibility and accountability** of the key food and nutrition security policy actors need to be clearly communicated and understood. Holding governments accountable, facilitating vigorous competition, assuring transparency in and building the capacity of civil society organizations, exposing the research community to national or international peer review for quality testing, and monitoring the quality of actions taken are key ingredients in enhancing the responsibility and accountability of strengthened actors. The implementation of this step, based on sound and transparent indicators, is an important task for the African Union/New Partnership for Africa's Development (AU/NEPAD).
3. **Governance in the food and agricultural sector** needs to be addressed at the macro as well as sectoral levels. This requires national governments to adopt and implement policies that encourage transparency and efficiency of food- and agriculture-related public organizations as well as of public and private operators serving agriculture and food and nutrition security. The adequacy of food and agriculture policies should be assessed and refined as necessary and integrated into the peer-review system proposed under NEPAD.
4. **African countries that lead can help others:** Countries showing good progress in achieving food and nutrition security in Africa can function as subregional leaders by sharing the knowledge and approaches that contribute to their success. A structured effort by NEPAD and the African Union or regional bodies to identify and support such lead countries would be an attractive and sustainable self-help approach. Moreover, it would be complementary to and should be supported by external aid. Focusing on outcomes in terms of sharp reductions in and achieved low levels of food and nutrition insecurity is advocated.
5. **Mobilizing international support:** There are four key areas where mobilization of large-scale investments and political support require continent-wide and international efforts in order to yield success:
 - coping with the HIV/AIDS crisis;
 - managing drought- and other crisis-related food security shocks;
 - investing in building and maintaining regional infrastructure; and
 - coping with transboundary issues such as livestock and crop diseases and pests, trade, labor migration, and management of regional common resources.

An international compact between Africa (and its countries) and the donor community is called for, perhaps under the AU/NEPAD framework. It would consist of the following: (a) Africa acts to address these basic problems with existing means (including the goal set in Maputo in 2003 of allocating 10 percent of national budgets for agriculture); and (b) the international community "underwrites" insurance against natural calamities through food and other aid, provides support for a massive scaling up of action to overcome HIV/AIDS infections, and supports agriculture and large-scale infrastructure investment based on well-designed investment and finance planning.

6. **Setting priorities for implementation and sequencing:** First, scale up agricultural growth in the smallholder sector to help reduce poverty and food insecurity. Second, scale up investment in local, national, and regional infrastructure, including roads and provision of safe water and proper sanitation. Third, design policy change to bring down domestic and interregional barriers to trade for food and agricultural products within Africa, and to open up OECD markets for African products, especially high-value products. Fourth, scale up nutrition- and food security-related investments in combined health and education programs, reaching the food and nutrition insecure through schools, health centers, hospitals, and communities, and support social safety nets. Each of these must be implemented by different groups of actors, which can change from country to country. The best means of implementation can be determined only in a country context. But best practices can and must be shared across Africa. The leaders of the African Union and of regional and subregional organizations play an important role in this context.
7. **Investing in agriculture:** The agricultural investment needed, both public and private, is highly diverse based on agro-ecology. There are, however, at least three common top priorities: (a) investing in improved seeds and livestock that fit the agro-ecology; (b) investing in the development and utilization of water for productive purposes and rural health; and (c) investing in a continent-wide effort to achieve sustained soil fertility.
8. **Monitoring implementation:** A small and transparent set of criteria for evaluating the quality of actions implemented to achieve food and nutrition security should be followed in country peer reviews. These evaluations must monitor progress or lack thereof in achieving food and nutrition security, based on clearly understood indicators, such as those monitored by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization. National human rights institutions should be encouraged to monitor the achievement of food and nutrition security.

In summary, the two goals of food and nutrition security in Africa are intimately related and should be jointly pursued. Food security is certainly achievable for all African citizens by 2020. The more complex goal of nutrition security for all may not be completely achievable by 2020, but it must move higher on the agenda, and central aspects of the nutrition security goal, such as overcoming micronutrient deficiencies (“hidden hunger”) and reducing child malnutrition, must and can be addressed by 2020. The road map for the way forward toward ending hunger in Africa is clearly drawn. If the actors are strengthened and walk forward together in new partnerships, then the goal can be reached in this generation.

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Note: The country listed for each committee member shows where that member is currently based.

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