



**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CONFERENCE ON  
SUSTAINABLE FOOD SECURITY  
FOR ALL BY 2020  
WEDNESDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2001**

Participants convened in the morning to consider economic forces affecting food security. Topics covered included: the role of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in making globalization work for developing countries; methods to make globalization benefit the poor; impacts on food security of industrialized countries' agricultural policies; and an EU perspective on promoting broad-based economic growth and food security. In the afternoon, participants examined technological and environmental forces, including the future of agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, the impact of climate change, food production technologies, and water issues. Participants also considered relevant sociopolitical forces.

**ECONOMIC FORCES**

**MAKING GLOBALIZATION WORK FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: THE ROLE OF THE WTO:** Mahmud Duwayri, Minister of Agriculture for Jordan, chaired this session, asking whether or not globalization promotes food security and helps alleviate hunger and poverty.

Supachai Panitchpakdi, Designate Director General of the WTO, said globalization can bring benefits but also risks. He speculated that damage caused by the Asian crisis of 1997-98 could be repeated elsewhere, and urged global preparedness to address such scenarios. On trade, he supported changes at the WTO to improve the preparation and participation of developing countries. He said the next trade round should address issues of importance for developing countries, including anti-dumping measures, textiles and agriculture.

During the ensuing discussion, Supachai Panitchpakdi highlighted WTO accession procedures as an area for improvement. He proposed discussion on allowing countries to become WTO members or associate members while deferring implementation of necessary but time-consuming domestic legal reforms. He also praised the EU's "Everything but Arms" initiative, while urging the phase-out of remaining exceptions.

**PUTTING GLOBALIZATION TO WORK FOR THE POOR:** Session Chair Isha Judge Ahluwalia, Director and Chief Executive of the Indian Council for Research on International and Economic Relations, highlighted opportunities for trade, investment and technology transfer offered by globalization. Identifying problems and possible barriers, Chair Ahluwalia asked whether developing countries have market access to developed countries, how the TRIPS Agreement affects technology transfer, and what should be done to address non-tariff barriers.

Eugenio Diaz-Bonilla, Research Fellow, IFPRI, drew attention to disputes on whether globalization is benefiting or hurting the poor. He discussed drivers of globalization at domestic and global levels in relevant areas, including governance, international trade and finance, technology and environment. He stressed the need to prioritize pro-poor policies to ensure that globalization helps the poor and hungry.

Robbin Johnson, Senior Vice President, Cargill Inc., highlighted the need for domestic transformation within poor countries, with a focus on rural development and small farmers. He discussed globalization's effects on domestic transformation, and said making globalization work for the poor requires attention to broadening socioeconomic transformation while avoiding external control.

Ango Abdullahi, Special Advisor on Food Security to the President of Nigeria, expressed disillusionment over realizing globalization's potential benefits for developing countries, due to unequal standards and an uneven playing field. He said that while globalization should address trade, investment, technology transfer and development assistance, an emphasis on trade over investment leaves developing countries unable to access technology and conduct research.

Chee Yoke Ling, Legal Advisor, Third World Network, drew attention to two conflicting paradigms: that of sustainable development to promote increased cooperation and collaboration, and that of market access and trade rules that promote protectionism. Stating that current trade rules are biased against the poor, she advocated trade policy reform. She opposed further extension of WTO rules into areas that do not relate directly to trade, and called for revision of the IMF conditionalities.

Robert Thompson, Director of the World Bank's Rural Development Department, highlighted problems for farmers in developing countries resulting from OECD rules and said upcoming WTO negotiations should reduce subsidies and protectionism. He expressed concern that support to agriculture has "fallen off the donor agenda," and drew attention to more pro-poor measures in the World Bank's current review of its rural development strategies.

During the subsequent discussion, participants addressed a number of issues, including: farmers' cooperatives; social safety nets; bias against the rural poor; problems of market liberalization; and the link between low food prices and lack of ODA for agriculture. One participant explained the "90/10 Rule" that most grain is consumed near where it is produced, while the 10% exchanged across borders sets world prices.

**THE LONG ARM OF INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES: HOW THEIR AGRICULTURAL POLICIES AFFECT FOOD SECURITY:** Win Simei, Professor at the Institute of Economic Development at South China Agricultural University, introduced the session, reflecting on personal experiences with food insecurity, and urging speakers to provide possible solutions on this issue.

Alex McCalla, Professor Emeritus in Agricultural Economics, University of California-Davis, argued that agriculture should drive developing countries' export-led growth, but noted that this is constrained by developed country protectionism. He expressed pessimism about the prospects for reduced developed country protectionism, given the delays in launching a new trade round and renewed calls for subsidies within the US and EU.

Shishir Priyadarshi, South Centre, examined how industrialized countries' agricultural policies affect food security in developing countries. He described the negative effects of domestic support, export subsidies, tariff escalation and non-tariff barriers. Linking food security to increased rural incomes, he advocated protection from cheap imports, free and fair market access, and support for small farmers.

In the ensuing discussion, participants were informed of a proposed food aid fund to be submitted to the WTO, and considered the distinctions between distorting and non-distorting subsidies and the means to deal with "gray areas."

**PROMOTING BROAD-BASED ECONOMIC GROWTH AND FOOD SECURITY: A VIEW FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION:** Poul Nielson, EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, labeled food security a "moral imperative." He

outlined the European Commission's approach to food security as an integral part of poverty reduction. He noted progress on linking the EU's trade and development policies, and highlighted its "Everything but Arms" initiative and the Cotonou trade agreement, as well as support for a new WTO round emphasizing developing countries' interests. He said the EU's food aid policy had evolved and improved. He also noted reductions in EU export subsidies, and suggested that the EU's current Common Agricultural Policy cannot continue after EU enlargement.

#### **TECHNOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORCES**

**THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AND SOUTH ASIA:** Peter Hazell, Director of IFPRI's Environment and Production Technology Division, chaired this session. He identified new challenges for small farms that threaten farmers' critical role in pro-poor development policies, and raised the question of how to rise above subsistence.

Dunstan Spencer, Managing Director of Dunstan Spencer and Associates, Sierra Leone, discussed prospects for small farmers in sub-Saharan Africa, who face challenges of globalization, declines in prices for traditional exports, increasing input costs, loss of competitive advantages and insufficient access to credit. He called for global cooperation to further good governance, improve health, and invest in people-centered development.

Ashok Gulati, Director of IFPRI's Markets and Structural Studies Division, described challenges facing farmers in South Asia, where 2% of the world's income supports 20% of its people. Challenges include efficiency of small landholdings, population growth, globalization, rapid economic growth and rising water scarcity. He urged opening of land markets, water pricing reforms, credit provision, investment in research and infrastructure, and liberalization of trade in rice, milk and sugar.

**HOW WILL AGRICULTURE WEATHER GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE?** Pedro Sanchez, Director General of the International Center for Research in Agroforestry, introduced this session by stressing that climate change is a development issue. He noted that Africa is predicted to be the region most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, and supported both adaptation and mitigation.

Martin Parry, Director of the University of East Anglia's Jackson Environment Institute, highlighted key conclusions from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Third Assessment Report, including that climate change is occurring already, and that some regions, including Africa and parts of Asia, will suffer from increased drought risk and will find their crop yields and agricultural output adversely affected. This is projected to increase the additional number of people at risk of hunger by 10%, mostly in Africa. Arguing that mitigation measures will not answer the problem alone, he supported adaptation, with particular investment in Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and small islands.

**COMPLEMENTARY TECHNOLOGIES, ONE GOAL: APPROACHES TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION:** Session Chair Klaus Amman, Director of Bern University's Botanical Garden, expressed his support for regional and country-based decision making, and advocated integration of organic and high-technology farming.

Jules Pretty, Professor at the Center for Environment and Society at the University of Essex, drew on research concluding that increasing agricultural productivity is possible through sustainable agriculture, which he defined as the integration of ecology, local knowledge and biodiversity in food production, to improve natural assets and create public goods.

Manuel de Jesus Reyes, a small-holder farmer in Honduras, recalled his experience with traditional practices of burning forests to make fields, and explained that this approach was unable to meet nutritional and economic needs, as soil rapidly became unproductive. He described his experience in successfully reducing erosion and dramatically increasing productivity by using sustainable agricultural techniques, including incorporating organic material to fertilize soil and utilizing natural means to control insects.

Prabhu Pingali, Director of the Economics Program, International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center, discussed conventional research-based technology. He stated that conventional breeding and research still has much to offer, but that integration of new technologies, including genetic engineering and genomics, is essential to offset declining food production.

K. Rajarathinavelu, Farmer, Allivaram Village, Tamil Nadu, India described the effects of the Green Revolution in his village, where rice is cultivated three seasons a year. He related how mechanization, irrigation, fertilization, pest management and electrification have tripled production yields, increased standards of living and helped the local economy.

Jennifer Thomson, Professor of Microbiology, University of Cape Town, urged a "doubly Green Revolution," and advocated the use of biotechnology to deliver crops with properties such as virus resistance, drought tolerance, and fungi and insect resistance.

Participants then discussed several issues, including: public-private partnerships; corporate control of seeds; traditional knowledge and benefit sharing; and environmental and health implications of modern biotechnology. Participants urged transparent assessment of alternative techniques, and greater investment in agroecology and farmer-led innovation.

**TROUBLED WATER, WATER TROUBLES: OVERCOMING AN IMPORTANT CONSTRAINT TO FOOD SECURITY:** Margaret Catley-Carlson, Chair of the Global Water Partnership, introduced this session. She noted that 70% of water supplies are used for agriculture, and highlighted problems of population, pollution and weather events that deplete available water supplies.

Keynote speaker Frank Rijsberman, Director General, International Water Management Institute, noted recognition among speakers that water is one of the biggest constraints to food security. He examined global water use and problems resulting from scarcity. He also defined land, water, nutrients and genetic resources as an integrated set of resources to be managed by all stakeholders and concluded by stressing the global challenge of growing "the food we need with the water we have."

#### **SOCIOPOLITICAL FORCES**

**FOOD INSECURITY: A SYMPTOM OF POVERTY:** Courage Quashigah, Minister of Agriculture of Ghana, introduced this session, highlighting linkages between food insecurity and poverty, and supporting clear goals and indicators.

Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, United Kingdom, stated that most people living in poverty are not self-sufficient in food production and need money to purchase food. She argued that focusing on agricultural production alone does not offer a solution to poverty or hunger. She highlighted development of national poverty reduction strategies as a way to incorporate food security strategies into broader development goals. She also supported the "sustainable livelihoods approach" to poverty reduction, and noted inadequacies in a purely sectoral approach. She said food aid should be a "last resort" and untied. She also supported the Paris 21 initiative on monitoring and indicators as a means to identify groups where hunger is leading to deepening chronic poverty.

#### **PARTICIPANT OPINION POLL**

Using a digital instant voting system, conference participants expressed their views on various relevant issues. Polling results indicated: a lack of consensus on whether there would be more food insecurity and poverty in 2020 in rural areas (36%) or urban areas (35%); strong support (80%) for the proposal that small-scale agriculture offers the best route to food security in the poorest countries; and clear divisions on whether genetic modification of staple crops for the poor in developing countries is a "good thing" (40%), a "bad thing" (33%), or "does not matter" (27%).

#### **THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY**

Participants will convene for the conference's final day at 9:00 am. Concluding remarks will be made by IFPRI Director General Per Pinstrup-Andersen at 5:30 pm. For more information, see the conference programme (<http://www.ifpri.org/2020conference>).