



## **“Food into Cities” Collection**

### **FOOD SECURITY IN AFRICAN CITIES**

#### **The role of food supply and distribution systems**

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Communication delivered to the Sub-regional FAO-ISRA Seminar  
"Food supply and distribution in francophone African Towns"  
Dakar, 14-17 April 1997

(working paper)

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This paper examines the relationship between food security and the Food Supply and Distribution Systems (FSDS) in Francophone African towns, against the background of a steeply rising urban demand, in a fluctuating social and economic environment. It also provides input for the preparation of policies to develop urban FSDS to improve the food security of the people in the countries of Africa undergoing economic stabilization programmes.

Looking back and at different countries one can see that FSDS are highly dependent on the concept of general policy, which itself swings according to convictions currently in vogue. FSDS can only be viewed in terms of social objectives, which are an essential prerequisite to defining policy.

After reviewing the major challenges facing urban Africa today and tomorrow, the paper examines the particular context of the structural adjustment programmes and their impacts on different constituent elements of food security: meeting need in terms of quantity and quality, access and risk. This is followed by a consideration of the political options for the future: should priority go to supplying the towns, using national, regional or international resources? What role should government and the institutions, including the financial institutions, play? How can employment be fostered, and under what conditions? How should the information needed to ensure the proper operation of a free market system be managed? A number of indispensable issues before defining FSDS development policies are then developed: clear objectives must be pursued by government, a methodological framework adopted with a multi-disciplinary focus, a food security monitoring system instituted, and the policies adopted must be evaluated.

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ADER</b>	Agence pour le Développement des Exploitations Rurales
<b>ANADER</b>	Agence Nationale pour le Développement Rural
<b>CEDRES</b>	Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Economiques et Sociales
<b>CIHEAM/IAM</b>	Centre International de Hautes Etudes Agronomiques/Institut Agronomique Méditerranéen
<b>ICN</b>	International Committee on Nutrition
<b>CT/CCI</b>	Comité Technique/Callously de Coordination de l'Information
<b>DCGTX</b>	Direction et Contrôle des Grands Travaux
<b>SDA</b>	Social Dimensions of Adjustment
<b>DSAP</b>	Direction des Systèmes d'Alerte Précoce
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>FMI</b>	Fonds Monétaire International
<b>FSDS</b>	Food Supply and Distribution Systems
<b>IAA</b>	Industries Agro-Alimentaires
<b>IBRD</b>	International Bank for Research and Development
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>INS</b>	Institut National de la Statistique
<b>LDCs</b>	Economically less developed countries
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OCPV</b>	Office d'Aide à la Commercialisation des Produits Vivriers
<b>SAP</b>	Structural Adjustment Programme
<b>SIM</b>	Système d'Information des Marchés
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium Enterprises
<b>SODERIZ</b>	Société de Développement du Riz
<b>SONAGES</b>	Société Nationale de Gestion des Stocks de Sécurité
<b>WAEMU</b>	West African Economic and Monetary Union
<b>WAMA</b>	West African Monetary Union
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WCAEMU</b>	West and Central African Economic and Monetary Community

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## INTRODUCTION

In the West African countries it is a matter of vital necessity to develop urban food supply and distribution systems in order to be able to cater for the increasing urban demand and growing urbanization. This development must be incorporated into the structural adjustment and economic stabilization measures, namely, into an environment that is both uncertain and in a state of flux at the present time. While FSDS had to be developed in a plan for society based on total liberalization, resources would certainly be needed, but the debate would be limited in scope, because it would merely involve transposing procedures that are already known. But the challenge is important for other reasons, because it involves designed liberalized FSDS with the main objective of guaranteeing food security to the towns. But are these concepts really contradictory?

In order to analyse this relationship between the development of FSDS and food security we shall firstly draw on the lessons of the past, to qualify the present notion of food security recalling that it is in fact a 'plural' concept. Most of the less economically developed countries are liberalizing their economies, but not all of them have decided on the same methods for doing so. These cautionary remarks are designed to show the reader that there is no one single recipe to suit every country. After briefly reviewing the present African urban context and more thoroughly examining the concepts of food security, we shall see where the adjustment and stabilization policies have had repercussions on the constituent elements of food security. We shall then examine a number of options on which governments will have to take decisions in terms of their food supply and distribution policies in order to guarantee urban food security by the year 2020. Lastly, we shall draw up a methodological framework for the implementation of FSDS development policies.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **The lessons of the past: different concepts of security and modes of implementation**

#### **1.1 - SUPPLY SYSTEMS LINKED TO THE HISTORY OF GOVERNMENT POLICY**

Famine and malnutrition have been a source of concern in every age, and relief for the victims has always been forthcoming. Yet it has only been in the first three decades of the present century that the nutrition and food sciences have come into being, bringing with them the unfolding debate on the role of government in this field.

It was back in 1937 that the International Committee on Nutrition (ICN) spelt out the need to frame national and international food policies: it asked whether it was up to governments to take responsibility for food and nutrition policy, to draft policies and apply them in a manner that would benefit crisis-stricken agriculture, by raising the consumption of what were known as 'protective' foodstuffs that would enable men, women and children to reach full physical and mental development while increasing resistance to many diseases.

These were very far-sighted provisions, but they were never implemented, and were only taken up again by ICN 55 years later. Over thirty years, the concepts of food security have developed and have passed through three main phases which have had concrete repercussions on the ways of feeding the people, and more generally on public food policy.

##### **1.1.1 - Food planning and supplies**

The idea of the essential role of government has been expressed most completely in food planning. The main idea underlying such measures is that under-nutrition and malnutrition could be reduced or eliminated through a set of technical measures, without radically challenging the division of the products of the economy and without requiring any far-reaching social reforms. Some researchers (Jonsson & Brun, 1978) attacked this view, arguing that food planning could only be effective if a more equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth became one of the governments' priority objects (Le Forestier, 1977).

The notion of food planning became established following the 1973/74 world food crisis, at a time of severe drought and widespread famine. USAID and FAO helped to set up food and nutrition planning systems. The focus of their concerns was food supplies. Food planning was seen as a necessary means of becoming self-reliant. The guiding principle was that each country should give priority to feeding its own people, and food dependency had to be reduced. These self-reliance policies were an emergency response to a contingent crisis which had become structural.

Food planning may be viewed as a set of sectoral policies covering the whole of the food chain, and particularly everything affecting the food supply. That was the time in which large government agencies or offices guaranteed agricultural production under "development projects", collecting the produce, processing it (through turnkey industries), importing and distributing it. As we know, large development projects were very biased towards cash crops, which governments saw as a means of earning foreign exchange. Since foodcrop planning was a failure, governments organized and governed food imports or food aid. Food security in the towns did not come within these priorities because there was still little urbanization in Africa at the time, and their aim was merely to guarantee global supplies for the country as

whole.

In reality, food planning basically meant agricultural planning, the idea being that food requirements would be automatically met as the result of agricultural development. The agriculture-oriented view of the food system was still given pride of place.

### **1.1.2 - Self-reliant food security and food supplies**

Food self-sufficiency can be achieved in two ways: through self-reliant development, or development with an opening-up to the international market. The former is a protectionist approach, because it aims at meeting national needs through selective imports and a policy to set prices independently of world markets. The latter is based more on the theory of comparative advantages, and has given rise to the concept of food security. It is founded on three principles:

- ! each country must seek to establish an agrifood trade balance by encouraging international specialization;
- ! each country must encourage national food production under sound economic conditions;
- ! each country must ensure that the disadvantaged sections of the population retain adequate access to food.

In the '70s and early '80s, self-reliant food security was the focus of government concern. Food strategy was perceived as an ideal way of attaining a high degree of self-sufficiency by adopting an approach guaranteeing consistency, integration and synergy between actions that had hitherto been piecemeal (Bencharif, 1990).

The work of the WFC has made it possible to spell out this notion as a means of enabling a country to reach a higher level of self-sufficiency thanks to an integrated effort at raising food production, improving food consumption and eliminating hunger. It involves examining a country's food situation to be used as the input for drafting a consistent set of measures, programmes and projects designed to achieve the government's food targets. The implementation of a strategy involves enhancing national capacities and mobilizing supplemental external aid. A food strategy therefore translates the government's priority for finding a practical and effective solution to its food problems. This approach places food problems at the very centre of government responsibility. It presupposes familiarity with all the elements in the food chain and the way it operates, and requires all the sectoral policies to be integrated and coordinated.

Self-reliant food strategies require multi-sectoral planning in order to achieve the political objective of food self-sufficiency. Governments cannot avoid confronting intense sectoralization of the economy, and in practice any strategy demands delicate forms of arbitration, as well as substantial resources to identify the food situation as clearly as possible and the bottlenecks in the food chain. This is certainly a very attractive scheme of things as far as the theory is concerned, but it has been a failure in practice because of conflicts of interest and the lack of peripheral policies.

It was during the course of these periods of self-reliant development that food policies became most widespread. Governments made a powerful political gesture by introducing food subsidies, which guaranteed them a degree of social peace. In addition to the advantage of meeting the food requirements, such a policy makes it unnecessary to implement specific



economic policies. Directing aid to commodities and adopting an autonomous pricing system makes it possible to control, and even conceal, economic inflation. It also makes it possible for the people to retain a certain purchasing power, making an incomes and social protection policy less costly. The obvious drawback is that this creates a bias towards the town dwellers, to the detriment of the rural people. With government more concerned to maintain subsidies for urban consumers than to guarantee self-sufficiency, which demands a much greater effort, public investment in agriculture was therefore diverted and governments imported cheaper food to meet their growing urban population. Structural food aid was widely used to provide cheaper food.

This phase in food strategy reflected a downstream and no longer an upstream approach to the food chain. One might think that introducing food subsidies was out of a concern for fairness and equity. But it was nothing of the sort. For the principle was not to establish a more equitable distribution of available food but simply to ensure that the urban population could feed itself at a moderate price. Since no kind of product or disadvantaged population targeting was planned, the result was that the subsidies pooled the deflationary effects with the benefits of supporting consumers. These policies, which were not viewed as targeted aid but as long-term policies, created an artificial economy that required very strict management. It was a combination that was ineffective (from the point of view of the agrifood sector), unfair and costly.

### **1.1.3 - Outward-looking food security and food supplies**

Economic difficulties coupled with the establishment of the benefits of free trade policies very quickly threw the food policies into disarray.

Parting company with the WFC, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) rejected toying with self-reliant development, and developed different concepts. In 1981 the Berg Report stated that food self-sufficiency was not a scientific, but a political and ideological concept. It was based on nationalism, and not on the economic lesson that the law of comparative advantages is the best guide in the area of food as in every other area of economic activity.

In the first half of the '80s, the free trade policies being advocated by the World Bank and the IMF were incorporated into Structural Adjustment Plans (SAPs). Food, which had been a priority before, was gradually watered down in the economic reforms whose main objective was to establish major macroeconomic equilibria by cutting expenditure and maximizing government revenues.

Under this approach, food security was treated as a global problem. The experts were convinced that combining economic growth with a healthy trade balance, balance of payments, and balanced state budget eventually generated a certain degree of prosperity. According to this thinking, specific actions to enhance food security are no longer necessary (Chenery, *et al*, 1977). According to this orthodoxy, all the subsidies to producers and consumers which, taken together, bear down heavily on the state budget and completely falsify prices, must be abolished.

The shifting of self-reliant self-sufficiency strategies towards free market strategies can be put down to three causes (Padilla, 1995):

- ! loss of financial independence by governments, which was an essential condition for implementing a self-sufficiency policy. Export revenues have fallen back while the

prices of foodstuffs and goods and services bought on the international market have soared. This upheaval in the terms of trade has had serious repercussions on governments' financial equilibrium;

- ! subsidies and demographic growth led to an increase in demand, but the inelasticity in the supply of agricultural products and the failure to control technology have pushed up food and technology imports. This has entrenched another kind of dependency, with repercussions on the national debt;
- ! the difficulty of managing a self-sufficiency policy, which requires a consensus between the conflicting interests of different social groups. "Nothing could be further from the truth than the idyllic image of African societies based on community and mutual support and aid. These are certainly societies based on redistribution and on relationships, but they are run through with a number of oblique strategies, family, ethnic or personal rivalries and clan in-fighting, as well as unspoken opposition between the young and the old" (Engelhard, 1996).

Because they were unable to solve these economic difficulties, countries were forced into accepting the IMF's free-market plans in order to qualify for international aid, negotiate the rescheduling of their debt and be granted any new loans. The relinquishment of self-sufficiency strategies can be explained more by economic constraints and social power relations rather than by any reasoned strategic choice.

The food situation of a given population and its economic health status are very closely linked, and one might think that by acting on the structural variables of the global economy governing the food economy it might be possible to eschew the implementation of specific food security policies. But economies and societies are the result of interactions between the parties that comprise them and the external forces that influence them. Expecting these forms of interdependence to lead to development and to food security is a pipe-dream. There is no such thing as an "invisible hand", but juxtaposed interests which rarely converge. Compensatory policies are all the more justified as the structural measures to balance the economy impoverish the people. Even though economists agree that this "mis-development" is only a passing phase, the repercussions of short-term and medium-term food insecurity on human development are sufficient to justify compensatory measures for the least favoured.

## **1.2 - THE TRANSITION TOWARDS LIBERALIZATION AND MODALITIES OF IMPLEMENTATION**

Economic liberalization and the way of implementing it are highly topical issues because the liberalization is taking place at a time of great challenges to the developing countries. One of the main challenges is feeding the cities. Within the group of the economically less developed countries, there is a contrast between Latin America which is already globally urbanized at the same level as North America (72% of the population were town dwellers in 1990) and Africa and Asia which are still predominantly rural, but over the next 30 years are expected to undergo an urban explosion. In Africa, at present urbanization level of one-third of the population is expected to reach 60% by 2025, according to UN sources. This will obviously have considerable repercussions on the food systems.

A number of recent surveys have analysed food security (IFPRI, 1995) and have posed one vital question: can world agriculture feed the world, in view of the urban concentrations which are continuing to grow all the time, raising serious food supply problems, in terms of quantity, distribution, quality, and cheaply into the bargain? Faced with this challenge, economic liberalization makes the organization of food systems problematic. Let us now see

how the economically less-developed regions are gearing themselves to this new situation (Rastoin, 1996).

### **1.2.1 -The Maghreb case: maintaining a strict centrally-planned framework with profitability obligations**

North Africa is an interesting example of the structuring of urban food systems. The three Maghreb countries all follow a Mediterranean diet based largely on wheat (the highest consumption of cereals in the world, at around 200 kilos per person per year) but because of the poor local production potential and its unpredictability massive cereals imports are required. In view of the social significance of bread and semolina (there were popular uprisings as a result of sharp increases in the prices of these products in the '80s), the governments of all three countries adopted strong intervention policies to guarantee a degree of stability for the prices of these commodities to shield them against the effects of variations on the international market.

An extreme case of an attempt to regulate this market is Algeria (Bencharif, 1996). The price of bread and semolina is set by the government at a very low level compared with the average purchasing power of the people and in comparison with other food products. This has led to wastage and misuse of the products. These political choices were taken in the framework of the highly centrally planned economy which existed in Algeria until 1990. The channels were organized around government-monopolized agro-industrial enterprises based on imported raw materials. Furthermore, to support local agricultural production and industries the purchase price of local farm products was subsidized and wages were supervised and controlled, with the result that very few people worked in agriculture and wages were minimal.

This is one case that shows the great difficulties caused by economic liberalization, because it is highly skewed. Constraints are both cultural and regulatory. The law on corporate autonomy dates back several years in both Algeria and Tunisia, but the mentalities of both the company managers and the civil servants responsible for supervision, and even the bankers, develop very slowly. Rigidities have been created by many years of government management and bailouts. Furthermore, the government only partially and very gradually honours its commitments to liberalize food prices, for fear of triggering off new popular uprisings. The processing and distribution companies are then faced with an impossible task: to apply the rules of company profitability in a free market, competitive system, while at the same time performing the function of guaranteeing food security to the people which was previously done by the government. This impossible situation is forcing many companies into bankruptcy: in Tunisia, only about 10% of the 4,000 companies in the food chain will manage to survive and apply the adjustment rules required to be incorporated into the liberalized market at both the domestic and the international level.

However they must adapt quickly from the point of view of urban supplies, in view of the pressure by urban consumers and the international financial organizations. The consumers are demanding a wider range of products, with quality guarantees, effective distribution and, of course, affordable prices. The IMF and the World Bank are pushing for the rapid liberalization of the agrifood channels. After rooting out the non-viable enterprises, there should emerge a hybrid model of distribution companies involving powerful international groups which are able to meet the needs of a wealthy population and proximity trade in all the neighbourhoods. The main problem is still the question of developing legislation that will allow genuine competition and not replace a government monopoly with a private enterprise

monopoly, which would be even worse, because in order to be viable private companies must be profitable and they do not receive government subsidies.

### **1.2.2 - The case of Latin America: the coexistence of two sub-systems**

In Latin America, urbanization is much older than in other continents. Ever since the 18th century this region has been the most urbanized on the planet. The supply systems have already adapted and are characterized by production areas which are often distant from the place of consumption. Transport, storage and the intermediary circuits (wholesale markets, retail markets) are well developed and complex. The large size of the towns makes it necessary for substantial volumes of products to be delivered, appropriately timed and with suitable of storage and transport methods. This has resulted in the creation of two systems:

- ! one system working mainly with non-processed traditional and proximity products, covering the rural zones;
- ! a modern system specializing in supplying the urban zones.

In the latter system, agriculture has adapted to this form of blanket coverage. Distribution through large stores is very common in the main cities. Unlike the economically-developed countries, small shops do not necessarily charge higher prices than large stores (Rello, in Douzant-Rosenfeld & Grandjean, 1995). Conversely, the wholesale networks are monopolies, which strongly condition the upstream prices of commodities.

Another peculiarity of Latin America is the importance of the urban middle classes who are the most dynamic in changing their food consumption patterns. Moving away from the traditional maize/dry vegetable diet they are now demanding more fresh fruit and vegetables, which requires traditional family farms to be reconverted to produce these commodities.

Linck (*in* Douzant-Rosenfeld & Grandjean, 1995) has analysed this development very clearly, taking the case of Mexico. The "Central de Abasto" is probably the most important wholesale fresh product market in the world with 16,000 tonnes of fruit and vegetables sold each day. Twelve specialized production areas, separated by large distances from each other in order to ensure that the produce can be staggered according to the seasons, supply this market. These areas specialize in the products and commodities in demand by the urban populations, often at the expense of local varieties which are less suitable for long distribution circuits.

One of the problems of organizing these channels is the acute concentration of wholesalers who dominate the whole fresh produce system, putting pressure on the upstream prices, namely, on the producers. They are in a powerful situation to fix the benchmark prices and protect their income by erecting entry barriers. Europe's experience shows that in these cases it is only a large concentration in the distribution chain that can break the obstacles created by the wholesalers (Rastoin, 1996). The recorded increase in consumption nevertheless shows that the system is able to respond to intense urbanization.

In Latin America, forms of government assistance have been much less intense and lasting than in North Africa. Food policies in the strict sense of the term (food coupons, subsidized goods, cut-price stores, etc.) have always targeted the poor districts or on the disadvantaged sections of the population. There is no generalized intervention here of the kind one finds in North Africa. Moreover, the adjustment to a liberal form of trade has taken place more rapidly.

### **1.2.3 - The case of Sub-Saharan Africa: the development of a peri-urban zone and the rise of the informal sector**

In Africa, the situation differs completely from Latin America. The WALTPS Study (*in Cour*, 1994) shows that the response of local agriculture to the soaring urban demand has been positive, but it was delayed due to the inertia in the consumption patterns and the production systems. The main reason for this success has to do with the proximity of agriculture to the urban demand: the creation of a green belt on the outskirts of the large urban centres. Communication and information on the demand side are thereby facilitated. The towns play a locomotive role for agriculture. The theory of outward-looking agricultural development has been amply confirmed here. Local agriculture has not suffered from international competition as a result of liberalization, in view of the comparative rigidity of the food consumption patterns in the towns. The level of food dependence of West African countries is still quite low: 10 to 15% of available food in 1985/1990. A commodity-based study (Leplaideur & Moustier, 1996) has revealed complementarity between the intra- and the peri-urban specialized products and the village systems with mixed food crops and vegetable. The main constraints that have been identified have to do with land tenure (the precarious state of land possession) or logistics (the inadequacy of transport and storage facilities) and technology (access to more profitable innovations). The authors also note a decline in the number of large processing units and more small local facilities, which are more accessible to small traders but result in lower product quality. These are less expensive and are more appropriate to a population whose purchasing power has been eroded as a result of structural adjustment and the devaluation of the CFA franc.

## CHAPTER 2

### The present African urban context and the challenges to FSDS

#### 2.1 - THE MAGNITUDE OF URBANIZATION AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS

In 1960, West Africa's urban population was 14% of the total. Today it has risen to 40% and is forecast to rise to 63% by the year 2020. However, there are major differences between countries. Mali, Niger and Chad had urban populations of around 15-20% in 1990 while Senegal and Nigeria had already reached 50%. But whatever the country, the increase will be steep, around 4-6% per year between now and 2020.

Urban growth is a powerful factor for development but over-rapid urban growth causes instability. Above a certain threshold, urban growth eventually leads to social exclusion and creates increasingly more resistant pockets of poverty. In the long term, these pockets of poverty become virtually impossible to deal with, and are the cause of insecurity and high social costs which may even outweigh the urban achievements. How can towns and cities reasonably absorb so many population flows and provide employment for them? It would appear reasonable to try to curb migration from the countryside, which only accentuates the gravity of urban problems. But this can only be done if innovative agricultural development policies are introduced. Urban poverty is fuelled by rural poverty, just as urban progress is fuelled by progress in the countryside.

Five strategies have been followed in different African countries to try to stem this influx of migrants: strict control over banning immigration to the towns or banning it altogether (the Republic of South Africa); forcible return to the rural regions (Mozambique); scattered urbanization (Nigeria); decentralization by promoting medium-size towns and by developing the regions (Zambia, Algeria), and creating new capital cities (Nigeria, Tanzania). None of these scenarios has really resolved the problem once and for all. One of the most effective and sustainable solutions would be to restore the pleasure of living the countryside. By reappraising and enhancing farm work, little by little the rural exodus would slow down.

There are many causes of this accelerated urbanization process (Pérennes, 1994):

- C economic causes, such as increased employment in manufacturing or services, the rural exodus and the need for better services (hospitals, schools, etc.);
- C social and cultural causes, such as the attraction of modern life in the towns;
- C temporary or contingent causes: people displaced by conflict, disasters, drought, etc.

More often still, urban growth of this kind is not controlled, and takes place haphazardly and illegally. The main consequences are an unhealthy environment, air and water pollution, the accumulation of waste, increased insecurity and rising crime rates. Governments are finding it difficult to play their proper role under these conditions. This negative image of the towns in the developing countries causes people to forget that in the West the towns have played a major locomotive role by fostering trade, making it possible to collect and disseminate information, acting as a place for the accumulation of capital and wealth, and that towns have had a dynamizing effect on the countryside. In Africa, the towns appear to be playing the reverse role: they are draining energy from the countryside. The younger and more highly skilled people are moving into the towns. But this underemployed and scarcely productive mass of people demand high-cost urban developments, that are poorly managed and rapidly deteriorate. Urban development is taking the place of the rural infrastructure that is an

essential precondition if the economy is to take off.

The rise in the urban populations has boosted the development of towns and satellite districts (Pikine, and Grand Yoff in Senegal) increasingly further away from the town centres and the large traditional markets. This is causing a spontaneous mushrooming of local markets with all the problems they entail. Furthermore, because of the distance between home and the workplace, and the difficulties of using public transport, the problem of the mid-day meal for the majority of wage- and non-wage earners has increased considerably.

Urban growth only brings problems with it. Its acceleration is a source of concern because the increasing flow of goods must be rapidly diverted towards these concentration points, and internal distribution in the towns has to be organized. Yet it also represents an opportunity to give fresh impetus to agriculture and trade, because it guarantees a stable market. The former scattered and fluctuating rural demand was incapable of generating any structural effects. But today there are guaranteed outlets for food of stable quality and quantity, and these opportunities are increasing. Without the market, the system cannot be galvanized.

### **2.1.1 - Is there a new urban consumer?**

As far as diet is concerned, urban consumers remain comparatively static. One of the main reasons is that urbanization is taking place too rapidly. The present town dwellers are only first or second generation. Social and cultural changes, as far as diet and feeding patterns are concerned, take a long time to come about. Several socio-cultural models have been seen to coexist in some African towns (Bricas, 1996):

- C a rural model, with household groups eating together following clear-cut rules for dividing up the groups of persons, dishes and modes of preparation;
- C an urban socialization model, with substantial non-household and non-kinship social relations, with people eating together but with new rules for division, new dishes and new modes of preparation;
- C an individualistic model, with the members of a group each individually, new products and dishes, and new ways of eating.

The urban population is not segmented between these different models. Every individual uses them all, rotating according to the time of day or the week.

There are varying positions and opinions regarding the proportion of imported food in the diet. Some say that in the urban regions traditional food and beverage consumption and distribution is declining. However, the composition of the diet still partially resembles the diet eaten in the rural areas. Urbanization is limited to developing eating habits based on imported products (bread, biscuits, confectionery, beer and non-alcoholic beverages). Most of these foodstuffs are now being produced locally. The raw materials for them are mostly foreign imports. Why do townspeople need imported food? The urban consumers want food that is easy to prepare in order to save time and fuel. Poor town dwellers want cheap food. Urban food policies have been based on imported products which are often cheaper than local products, and on food aid. Lastly, the expatriate communities and an emerging middle class have created a demand for processed products. Other authors have found that local fresh food forms an important part of the diet, but with only a small proportion of imported products (particularly at Cotonou). Local processed products are frequently adapted to meet the needs of urban life (Bricas & Thuiller-Cerdan, 1996).

Industrially-produced food has also been introduced into the traditional eating patterns of town dwellers with medium to high incomes. At Ouagadougou, for example, food accounts for a major share (averaging 40%) of total cash expenditure (Savané, 1992). Expenditure on industrial foods accounts for 16% of the total food bill, which is quite considerable. Food processing costs are also high, considering that water and fuel costs account for as much as 18% of the amount spent on food. Purchases of products to make sauces (meat, fish, vegetables, spices) are high in urban areas. Bread has now become an integral part of the daily diet of urban families. But the share of bread in the diet depends very much on income differences.

Eating out is typically linked to the urban situation. It is the low-income households that eat out most, because they do not have the means of preparing three meals at home. Eating out includes full meals taken outside the home, and snacks eaten between meals in the streets.

One of the features of the urban food demand is that it is very largely based on non-traded food. It seems that over 20% of urban food passes through these grassroots circuits (Bricas & Thuiller-Cerdan, 1996; Egal, 1997), using urban redistribution channels thanks to urban farming, and the fact that town dwellers maintain links with their family members still living in the country.

Consumers in urban and peri-urban zones are, however, dependent on locally prepared food which can be bought on market stands or in the street. However, the nutritional quality and the hygiene levels of this food is dubious.

Physical access to food is possible virtually everywhere except in a number of marginalized zones because of a lack of infrastructure (north and eastern Burkina Faso) and in the rainy season (in northern Côte d'Ivoire). Surveys carried out at Dakar, Abidjan or Ouagadougou (Savané, 1992) have shown that animal and vegetable products are comparatively plentiful on these markets. This shows that the supply circuits are working well. Supplies are more regular in the towns than in the countryside, particularly cereals. Seasonal variations are larger for fruit and vegetables than for animal products.

The main obstacle to food security at the present time is monetary access to products, because price deregulation has caused sharp increases (although they have been slowing down slightly over the past few months). The recent devaluation of the CFA franc has made imported products extremely expensive. There has also been a return to the consumption of local traditional products (attiéké, plantains, maize, leaf vegetables) at the expense of processed and non-processed imported foods (rice, wheat, industrial products, frozen meat). The necessary increase in purchasing power certainly depends on global economic development, but one effective measure would be to control the flow of financial resources towards the developed countries or countries offering a high return on capital. Lastly, where no purchasing power policy has been included in the structural adjustment plans, the only way of guaranteeing sufficient food for everyone is to offer products at reasonable prices by rationalizing the food chain.

African consumers typically lack an awareness of their status as consumers. The only thing that seems to concern them is to have a full stomach. Rights, nutrition education and rules of food hygiene are often unknown. Consumer associations are beginning to develop but they are mostly based on political considerations or the desire to hit the headlines rather than being run by specialized teams with competence in their particular field. They hardly affect the consumers because of illiteracy or the fact that the consumers' concerns are not represented.



Burkina Faso has two consumer organizations: the "Ligue des consommateurs" and the "Association Burkina des consommateurs". Attempts are now being made to set up something similar in Côte d'Ivoire.

For the consumer, the social aspect of food purchases seems to be more important than quality (nutrition, hygiene, convenience and low cost). Consumers need to be educated, and this could be done mainly through the schools. The best way to bring pressure to bear on the market would be a consumer boycott of certain foods. However, this kind of education demands funding which is not at the present time available.

The quality of the urban diet is such that the food use and consumption patterns are "time bombs" as far as personal health is concerned. Contamination and food poisoning are the order of the day. This public health problem is not one of the priorities of the health ministries which implement a curative rather than preventive health policy, and are not sensitized to nutrition issues and the connection between nutrition and health.

Rather than introducing punitive measures at the end of the food chain to stop inedible products being sold, it would be more useful to create a consumer-oriented mentality, to enable people to know their rights and to give them a minimum of health education.

### **2.1.2 - Enlarged distribution networks**

Urban population growth has had many different repercussions on the food systems:

- C the corresponding increased food demand is gradually outstripping the capacity of the surrounding areas to meet urban needs; supply sources are increasingly further removed from the towns, complicating supply flows and pushing up transport costs;
- C the ethnic composition of the population is also changing. New products forming the staple diet of the migrants are becoming more prominent and are changing the trading circuits. The ethnic mix and second generation urbanization will change feeding patterns;
- C the spatial expansion of the towns has enhanced the role of infrastructure (transport, markets, industry) and catering services;
- C the market is becoming the main source of the food supplies. Prices and incomes are therefore becoming decisive factors;
- C because of urban land restrictions and constraints multi-storey buildings are being developed, changing living conditions and preventing the preparation of traditional dishes.

## **2.2 -POVERTY AND LIVING STANDARDS**

In the Sub-Saharan African countries living standards are overall lower than in other economically less developed countries. This can be seen from the demographic indicators:

**Table 1 DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**  
**Tableau 1**

	World	LDCs	Subsaharan Africa
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Annual population growth (%)			
1960 - 1990	1.8	2.3	2.8
1990 - 2000	1.7	2.0	3.2
<hr/>			
Urbanized population (%)			
1960	34	22	15
1990	45	37	31
<hr/>			
Birth rate (1990)	24		24

42\_\_Death rate (1990)

\_10\_9,5\_15,1\_\_Life expectancy (1990)\_65,5\_62,8\_51,8\_\_Source: *Human Development Report, UNDP, 1996.*

### 2.2.1 - Extent, depth and features of the new poverty

Information on low urban living standards is very limited and fragmentary and it is difficult to evaluate the extent and the depth of poverty. The most we can say is that the nature of poverty has changed, as well as the type of people affected by it. In the '60s, and subsequently, urban poverty was mainly fuelled by rural poverty. It was rural migration into the towns as a result of poverty that led to population shifts to the towns, rather than being the result of a demand for urban labour because of the economic development of the towns (Egal, 1997). Since the '80s, with the implementation of the structural adjustment plans and more recently with the devaluation of the CFA franc, impoverishment has affected every socio-economic class because of strong family pressure on solvent families. This impoverishment is the result of a reduced purchasing power which has led to a decline in food expenditure: -30% between 1980 and 1985, -30% between 1986 and 1995 (Egal, 1997). The middle classes are the most badly affected by this, because they depend on the market economy. UNDP estimates that one-third of the urban population now lives below the poverty line in the Sub-Saharan African countries (UNDP, 1996).

### 2.2.2 - At-risk groups, and where they are

The following households are more vulnerable than others, and suffer from food insecurity:

- C the newly urbanized people coming from the rural environment who find it difficult to integrate into a new environment;
- C single mothers with dependent children;
- C junior civil servants whose salaries are paid late because of the government's cash-flow difficulties;
- C households living on small-scale activities, often in the informal economy;
- C the disabled, the sick and the old, without family support.

These at-risk groups mostly live on the outlying neighbourhoods that are ignored by the local authorities, which lack infrastructure and where the people are concentrated in temporary or precarious dwellings. It is only when the population becomes extremely dense that the authorities are forced to provide a few facilities, when they can (electricity, water, roads, evacuation of waste water and subsequently solid waste, in that order of priority).

### 2.2.3 - The living standards of the urban African population under the SAPs

Low and medium-income households spend virtually all their income on food (about three-quarters). The high and medium-income households are not in an easy situation either, because they have to cater for an increasingly large population: more and more people are migrating from the rural areas, and the new arrivals are finding it increasingly more difficult to meet their own needs, which is placing an ever heavier burden on the incomes of households that have already settled in the towns. The urban households are increasing in size as the number of adults continues to grow. But very often the family mutual aid system breaks down. Considering the level of prices of goods and services in the urban areas, incomes are no longer sufficient to cover basic food expenditure. Women's incomes are therefore having to be used to cover an increasing large proportion of household costs. These are now an essential component of the urban food balance.

Urban household strategies are designed to maintain living standards, particularly food consumption levels. They may be summarized as follows according to surveys carried out in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal, even though it is not possible to rank these patterns:

- C a reduction in polygamy and a corresponding decline in the number of children;
- C the search for supplementary incomes (renting land or dwellings, informal trading activities);
- C urban or suburban agriculture;
- C organizing wholesale purchases by households with sufficiently high and regular incomes;
- C in low-income households, women without paid employment work in the informal sector: small-scale food trade, street meals. These financial contributions mainly go on food, children's clothes, and sometimes to pay for water and electricity (Savané, 1992);
- C non-attendance at school by the children who take small jobs or become delinquents;
- C the emergence of small-scale poorly paid trades;
- C the breakup of families: the children are sent back to their home villages;
- C taking on weekend supplies in the villages and surrounding towns in order to pay less for food;
- C reducing the number of meals taken during the day.

The poor households use very specific food supply structures, of which the most frequent are the small local markets, and eating street food. It is therefore through these FSDS structures that these vulnerable people or those already suffering from food insecurity can be reached.

### **2.3 - SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY**

The unfavourable period through which Sahelian Africa or Sudano-Sahelian tropical Africa is passing at the present time can certainly be explained in terms of an inadequate development of technology, the ineffectiveness of the services to agriculture and the poor operation of the markets. But the main reason has to do with political and social instability. Of 34 countries in which food availability has worsened since 1970, 20 have been through civil wars. Concern about feeding Africa must therefore be focused mainly in the political area (Griffon, 1996).

## CHAPTER 3

### Different concepts of food security and their ability to respond to the challenges raised by urban growth

#### 3.1 - DIFFERENT CONCEPTS OF FOOD SECURITY AND THEIR OBJECTIVES

There is no one single universal concept of food security. The notion has developed considerably since it emerged in the '70s. More than thirty definitions were found between 1975 and 1991 (Maxwell & Frankenberge, 1995), showing the many different approaches that exist to the issue. It would seem to have shifted from highly economic and quantitative considerations in a more humanistic and qualitative direction.

All the definitions emphasize four types of development:

- C from macro-level to the micro-level concern; from the notion of evaluating national food stocks, the concept has developed to the household level based on the perception of means of access (Sen, 1981) to the food resources created by the population;
- C from concern to ensure an adequate level of supply, towards concern to meet the demand. Are the physical and economic conditions of access adequate? In this stage, there is a shift away from a perception of food as such, towards a consideration of household living standards;
- C the breakdown of household consumption reveals the vulnerability of certain sections of the population (women, children, the old) and have driven the search for household level security towards individual food security;
- C from a concern for short-term food security (one year) towards long-term food security (permanent). This development is the consequence of the emergence of the concept of sustainability linked to respect for the environment.

A few definitions of food security:

- C the capacity at all times to provide the world with staple products to support increased food consumption, while controlling price fluctuations;
- C the capacity to reach the desired levels of consumption on an annual basis;
- C a given capacity to finance import requirements to meet the desired consumption levels;
- C assuring every individual at all times of physical and economic access to the food they need;
- C access at all times by all people to the food they need for an active and healthy life (World Bank, 1994);
- C a country and a people have food security when the food system works in such a way that no-one is afraid of not having sufficient food;
- C when every person has, at all times, physical and economic access to meet their basic food needs. A national food security strategy cannot be contemplated without guaranteeing food security at the level of the home;
- C the capacity to ensure that the food system provides the whole population with nutritionally adequate food supplies over the long term (Staatz, D'Agostino & Sundberg, 1990);
- C food security exists when the viability of the household, defined as both a production and a reproduction unit, is not threatened by a food deficit.

Over these years, most of the definitions have converged towards a number of key words: satisfaction, access, risk, sustainability.

Food requirements must be met in both quantitative and qualitative terms. The concept of sufficient food can be defined in terms of a given number of calories, the quantity needed for to survive or to lead an active and healthy life, by measuring the consequences of undernourishment (genetic, physiological or behavioural changes), or in terms of an estimated need by household or by individual. Qualitative satisfaction presupposes a nutritional balance in the diet (proteins, fats and carbohydrates) but also a sufficient intake of micronutrients. Furthermore, food must meet certain satisfactory health and hygiene standards. There is therefore some ambiguity about what constitutes the optimum level of satisfaction.

Access to food depends on food security. At this level a distinction should be drawn between availability and accessibility. Availability refers to the short term, and may be limited by insecurity in the area, or the fact that a village is inaccessible, or food prices. Availability is necessary for accessibility to food, but is not in itself sufficient. For example, a region may have food stocks, but a particular village in that region may be suffering from food insecurity between seasons because of its isolation. Again, even though the village market may be well stocked, a particular family may suffer from food insecurity due to unemployment or if it cannot afford the pay market prices. Accessibility to food is a medium term concept. More often than not, it is a combination of production, trade and social mechanisms. In the countryside, the people mainly rely on what they themselves produce, supplemented by food trading on the market. In the towns, the people's food requirements are mainly met by the market. In the latter case, social mechanisms (mutual aid, family support, food aid, loans) will be used in order to maintain access by the people to the available food and to guarantee their food security.

The notion of adaptation risks and mechanisms lies at the heart of food security. The level of risk for a household or a community depends on the modalities of access to food and on available capital. To minimize the risks, the people use adaptation mechanisms or reactions mechanisms at three levels:

- C production (diversification, staggering, storage) for the rural population, changing the structure of the diet in the case of urban dwellers (buying cheaper food items);
- C economic activities: increasing revenues by working in the formal, but above all the informal, sector or investing in non-productive assets (jewellery, clothing, livestock, liquid cash), exchanging humanitarian aid products for liquid cash or other assets;
- C social relations: borrowing in cash or kind, mutual aid and support, multiple registration of the family with humanitarian aid agencies.

When these adaptation mechanisms are inadequate and threaten the household's food security, various things are done to deal with this unfavourable situation, in three stages:

- C a minimized risk strategy: informal activities by children, changing feeding patterns (urban gardening, reducing food rations, reducing the number of people eating in the home, eating cheaper meals out of the home) (Akindès, 1995), seeking support (from the family, relations, the community), selling unproductive assets;
- C selling productive capital assets: tools, livestock or land in the case of the rural population, and selling reserves or renting or selling the house in the case of urban dwellers;

- C the temporary migration of certain members of the family, followed by the permanent migration of the whole household.

The vulnerability of a population in a region suffering from crises depends both on measures that can be implemented in a given context and the capacity of households to respond to these events. The vulnerability of a population may be estimated by analysing the adaptation and reaction mechanisms implemented and the way they respond to a difficult situation. When the mechanisms are not effective, the household becomes chronically vulnerable.

Sustainability: insecurity is temporary when the household is temporarily incapable of meeting the food requirements of the members of the family. This may be due to unexpected events occurring (insecurity for political reasons) or it may be seasonal because of logistical difficulties or high prices.

Chronic insecurity may be the result of a series of temporary situations of food insecurity which have exhausted all the response capabilities.

The measures required will depend on whether insecurity is temporary or chronic.

### **3.2 - IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHOICE OF CONCEPTS FOR FOOD SECURITY ACTION**

The basic choice between galvanizing the system upstream of the food chain or downstream of it in order to create food security is a non-starter. Today most researchers and practitioners agree that a balance must be struck by considering food availability and food access to be of equal importance. (Pinstrup Andersen, 1995). At the present time, the concept of food security is approached from different points of view, as shown in the following tables. These tables indicate the factors to be taken into account in a food security strategy, grouped in terms of timeframe and level.

They show that food security can be approached in different ways, and that it is a multi-disciplinary concept which takes account of technical, economic, social, cultural and political dimensions. Global food security, as recommended by the FAO World Food Summit, would require the consistent simultaneous implementation of all of these measures. Lastly, the concept of food security must form part of the broader concept of food strategy, which itself forms part of a socio-economic development strategy. Figure 1 recalls the main components of a food strategy that is able to meet these objectives and refers to both macroeconomic and sectoral policies (Gherssi & Martin, 1996).

#### **Figure 1 The main components of a food strategy**

*Source: Ghersi & Martin, 1996*

Universal food security presupposes permanent security (short, medium and long term) at all levels (macro, meso and micro). Depending upon the choices of the authorities, certain food strategy elements must be given particular emphasis as the following tables show:

#### **Table 2 FOOD SECURITY STRATEGIES AT THE MACRO LEVEL (NATIONAL AND INTER-SECTORAL PERSPECTIVE) Short term**

*Food crisis early warning:*

floods and drought;  
badly distributed rainfall;  
increased food prices;  
sale of livestock;  
food deficits;

*Food crisis management:*

use of security stocks;  
supplementary food imports;  
food aid distribution

**Medium term**

*Favourable macroeconomic conditions:*

per capita income growth;

employment level;

price stability;

exchange rate to avoid over-evaluation and permit foreign exchange access;

*Intersectoral balance to avoid penalizing agriculture:*

investment in agriculture;

curbing the rural exodus and urbanization;

development of agrifood industry sources of supply and incomes.

*Attention to the impact of government policy on food security*

**Long term** (TEXT MISSING)

**Table 3**

**FOOD SECURITY STRATEGIES AT THE MESO-LEVEL  
(AGRIFOOD SECTOR CHANNELS AND MARKETS)**

**Short term**

Liberalization of legislation on food marketing;

Guarantee not to exceed a ceiling price by acting on stocks, imports and food aid;

**Medium term**

Reduction of formal and informal transaction costs by simplifying commercial procedures,  
Standardization of measurements and setting quality standards, and combating corruption;

Improving information given to traders on prices and selling and purchasing opportunities on  
different markets; Improving competition by removing unjustified public and private  
monopolies and ensuring competition between oligopolies;

Liberalization of prices.

**Long term**

(TEXT MISSING)

Improving access to credit by producers, traders, processing SMEs; improving the understanding of the operation of markets and channels, the behaviour of the parties involved, the impact of food security programmes

**Table 4**  
**FOOD SECURITY STRATEGIES AT THE MICRO-LEVEL**  
**(URBAN HOUSEHOLDS)**

**Short term Medium term**

**Long term**

Malnutrition indicators linked to the health, and economic (prices, purchasing power, food availability) context.

Household strategy:

- ! work by women and children;
- ! changing the diet;
- ! changing the allocation of food within the household;
- ! reducing the number of meals.

Chronic malnutrition indicators linked to the health context (prevalence of illness, fresh water access, household health practices, health and medical services);  
in conjunction with socio-cultural practices (role distribution, the rights of men and women, beliefs and taboos);  
linked to the economic context (poverty, activities, resources, vocational training).

Household strategies:

- ! using famine food;
- ! borrowing within the household;
- ! temporary migration of some members of the household;
- ! borrowing from moneylenders.



## CHAPTER 4

### STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND FOOD STABILIZATION AND SECURITY POLICY

#### 4.1 - SAPs AND MODALITIES OF IMPLEMENTATION

The macroeconomic and financial imbalances noted at the end of the '70s were related to the combination of inappropriate domestic policies (recourse to borrowing because of a lack of savings, non-productive projects, money taken from agriculture to finance bureaucracy, ineffective and costly public intervention, etc.) and the unstable and unfavourable international environment (inflation, the oil shocks, fluctuations in raw material prices, etc.). During the '80s many countries in the Sub-Saharan zone used SAPs which they justified by the need to ensure government solvency. The IMF and the World Bank rescheduled their debts with conditionalities attached. The SAPs were built around three main objectives: restoring a balanced budget, restoring the trade balance, and the balance of payments. To do this the following three principles were applied:

- ¥ restructuring demand through a budgetary policy to reduce public expenditure;
- ¥ liberalizing the economy by reducing government intervention, privatizing State corporations, liberalizing prices, etc.;
- ¥ opening up to the international market based on the principle of competitive advantages.

Structural adjustment therefore created a "virtuous circle" for economic operation (see Figure 2) generating an export-led development process (Griffon, Henry & Lemelle, 1991).

#### **Figure 2** **Simplified outline of the objectives and operation of structural adjustment**

#### 4.2 - CONSEQUENCES OF SAPs ON FSIDS AND FOOD SECURITY

It is difficult to evaluate the SAPs for methodological reasons. According to Azoulay and Dillon (1993) several approaches are possible:

- ¥ analysing the conditions for implementing the programmes in terms of the objectives set;
- ¥ analysing the relevance and appropriateness of the programmes in terms of the African situations;
- ¥ questioning the principle of opening up, standardization and analysis in terms of combating poverty and of development.

¥  
¥ For the purposes of this paper we shall analyse the various elements of food security: availability, accessibility, risks, sustainability.

¥

##### ¥ **4.2.1 - The immediately perceptible consequences**

¥

¥ What we have been able to note are not solely the direct consequences of structural adjustment but the outcome of twenty years of centralized planning and ten years of structural

adjustment. Liberalization has often exposed existing shortcomings in the FSDS, but it has also had negative repercussions on the organization and operation of the FSDS.

¥

#### ¥ 4.2.1.1 - Availability

¥

¥ The availability food products depends on the level of production, the level of the industrial development and the sound operation of the marketing system. We shall briefly examine the different parties involved in these sectors of FSDS:

¥

##### ¥ a) Producers

¥

¥ The agrarian system is hardly developing at all, there is no turnover among the agricultural population which is ageing. The population burden per farmer is rising. At the present time, for example, a farmer in Côte d'Ivoire has to feed one town dweller, whereas thirty years ago the ratio was five to one. The situation is changing much more slowly in Burkina Faso, however, which still remains profoundly rural (12% urbanization rate). Only by intensifying production and raising the living standards of the farmers will it be possible to cater for the needs of the population and meet the export demand, since agriculture is often the only possible source of foreign exchange.

¥

¥ Food crop production is substantial and would be sufficient if waste and losses could be controlled (food losses total 8 million tonnes in Côte d'Ivoire). There is a fairly good spread of local produce on the markets, but it is not possible to quantify it or discover its geographic origin, or the circuits used by these flows. This is a major shortcoming if the supplies are to improve in time and in space.

¥

¥ There is great agricultural potential: although extensive agriculture is no longer advisable because it is currently being practised on fragile land and therefore threatens to make the ecological environment unsustainable, farming could be intensified using quite simple techniques. The former public extension services such as ADER in Côte d'Ivoire have been dismantled, but nothing has been put in their place. There is a lack of knowledge about food issues, even though examples exist that show that there is a strong political will to change this situation, and considerable effort can still be made (Côte d'Ivoire is a case in point, which has now self-sufficient in rice in seven years thanks to the establishment of a properly resourced SODERIZ). In Burkina Faso the government continues to control extension. The reorganization of the services, however, has made it possible to set up pilot stations, with demonstrations through the assignment of village plots given by technical extension workers. ANADER is responsible for them. One of the major problems is to win back the farmers' confidence in the technical agents. In the past they were civil servants specializing in just one product, and there was a high turnover among the agents, who sometimes gave the people contradictory advice. Today the technicians must be multi-disciplinary, and must be able to take a comprehensive view of the farm.

¥

¥ Agriculture which is highly fragmented is not organized (we are not talking here about cash crop farming for exports, which has its own organization and rules). Setting up organizations for the producers is one way of standing up to the traders, and is wholly to their benefit. For example, coffee producers in Côte d'Ivoire used to earn 10% of the market value of coffee. Today they receive 60% (according to our discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture). Agriculture under contract would provide a guarantee to the traders or to the industrialists, but contracts could also be concluded with producer groups to exploit economies of scale. Are people's mentalities ready for this, though? Agreements between

farmers and traders are taking time to become established.

¥

¥ Unplanned production is a cause of substantial loss of earnings to producers. For plentiful supplies of the same products arrive on the markets at the same time, and prices therefore plummet. If production schedules were laid down, would prevent this from occurring. Off-season products are often too expensive because of losses and the lack of irrigation. In the dry season people have to choose between using the water for drinking or for irrigation.

¥

¥ Liberalization has temporarily benefited production because of price increases, but this effect might boomerang because price rises have led to over-production, so that some people have sold short or prices have fallen. Discouraged farmers could give up producing these products, which would create shortages once again.

¥

¥ As far as livestock is concerned, the current system is extensive, based on transhumance, but the livestock population is small. However, this is a safe form of capital investment in the absence of a proper banking systems; the livestock is only sold off to meet cash requirements of herdsmen which are deliberately restricted in order to ensure that the capital does not disappear in the name of family solidarity. To make up for the shortage of beef, attempts to develop poultry farming have been successfully carried out by rationalizing traditional methods, particularly in Ouagadougou. The advantage of this production is the proximity of the town and the fact that conservation problems are concealed by selling live chickens. But poultry farming is limited by the shortage of chicken feed.

¥

¥ Pressure on the land is very strong. The government inherited colonial legislation under which everything belongs to the State. Today, property is being transferred to individuals on condition that the land is either farmed for crops or used for buildings. Customary law clashes with Statute law and the result is always to the benefit of the government. Customary law is now re-emerging and it will be necessary to lay down regulations to prevent unplanned and haphazard installations being set up on the land and unpredictable land settlement patterns. The new arrivals negotiate with the people holding customary rights and unlawfully buy the land. The government is the main land planner and manager in the towns at the present time.

¥

¥ Around the towns a market gardening belt is being set up. The circuit is very short: production is in the town or only 10 to 20 km outside. It is a very dynamic business (the idle own periods are becoming shorter) and it is still very profitable. It is indispensable to organize this sector because there are substantial losses and very sharp peaking in food availability, which lowers producer prices. Better productivity would be advisable, but that is highly dependent on the seed quality: people normally produce their own seeds, which affects the quality of the product and yields. Production is also highly dependent on land tenure: plots are becoming fewer in number as the towns expand, and market gardening is carried out on rented land, which is not being used for other commodities. There are no service facilities (refrigeration, packaging, etc.).

¥

¥ Agricultural credit, which is vitally important, comes and goes: government institutions have often been wound up, and the private sector has only taken with great reluctance. At the present time there are a few credit services based on a mutual system. There are also social funds which take the form of loans to businessmen, requiring collateral, which poses problems.

¥

¥ Basically the drama of the West African countries is the fact that agriculture is not considered to be a trade. It is a social and cultural component. The disorganization that exists downstream does not give a full understanding of the value of the efforts made upstream.

¥

¥ A sociological analysis of African society would bring out more clearly some of the obstacles to progress. For example, to challenge ancestral cropping practices is considered an act of disobedience and an infringement of the obligation to show proper respect for and to submit to the elders. How can these obstacles be removed? One example comes from Burkina Faso where people are refusing to apply intensification techniques to traditional cereals (millet and sorghum) even though there are no objections in the case of new crops such as maize.

¥

¥ b) Traders and distributors

¥

¥ The marketing problem is much more acute in some countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire or Senegal, than in others, such as Burkina Faso which only markets 10% of its output, while the rest is consumed by the farmers themselves. There is a social division of trade. Cereals are traded by the men (maize, millet, sorghum, rice) while foodcrops are traded by the women (cassava, yam, plantains, fruits and vegetables). In Côte d'Ivoire, 90% of the food crop trade is handled by the women. They are also responsible for controlling the sale of artisanally prepared or processed products in the towns.

¥

¥ Women traders also perform a distribution function which does not exist at the most widely fragmented level. They have shown great adaptability in adjusting to the resources and needs of the consumers. They control the whole of the food chain, from credit to sale, and they cannot be ignored.

¥

¥ The organization of marketing is *sine qua non* condition for the development of agriculture and the establishment of the CMAOC - the large regional market of twenty countries in West and Central Africa. This large market has reduced the number check-points which hold up the products and gives rise to the levying of illegal taxes, and it is streamlining procedures and has introduced common regulations and a list of approved traders. In order to prevent the establishment of cartels and monopolies, plans have been made to help the trade unions and Chambers of Commerce set up a system of commodity-based trades. Road, storage and market facilities will be necessary to facilitate commodity flows and limit the very high loss rates (20 to 40% in Côte d'Ivoire, for example).

¥

¥ There is no chance of planning production until transport is regular, adequate and cheaper. The few hauliers that exist are more inclined to transport profitable products such as cacao, coffee, cotton, export commodities, in preference to fresh produce, in order to make up for the very heavy and illegal taxes they are forced to pay. They want to pay a license fee exempting them from having to pay all these different taxes.

¥

¥ At the present time there is no wholesale market, as this term is understood in Europe. The first one is being set up at Bouaké. Markets are mushrooming spontaneously at the transshipment points and near the places where goods are consumed. The government is using these natural crossroads in order to set up markets with facilities, which the local authorities are currently managing and maintaining. Because of a lack of skilled workers, facilities, resources and will, the state of the markets leaves much to be desired. The large market at Ouagadougou is a very good case in point: it started off on the wrong foot at the beginning and today it accommodates 400 traders, while a further 20,000 applicants are

waiting their turn. Its management and maintenance are subcontracted to a private firm. While the services supplied in exchange for the license are convincing, the organized market can syphon off the majority of trade, otherwise there is a risk of parallel markets developing (this is a challenge to the Bouaké wholesale market which still has to convince 600 wholesalers of its usefulness).

¥

¥ The market infrastructures are poor and there are no cold chambers, which means that perishable goods, particularly meat, must be sold the same day.

¥

¥ In Côte d'Ivoire, three collection centres have been set up to channel the goods towards Abidjan in place of the production markets. Even though this change is more profitable in terms of transport and marketing, in effect it is acting as a brake on market transparency because it cuts off the producers from the traders. It is on the production markets that the first market price is set. Without information, this separation makes the market less transparent still.

¥

¥ Very often the traders act as money-lenders to the farmers. Their collectors act as brokers and provide all the information needed to negotiate prices. In years when production is low the traders practise a policy of patronage, lowering the legal tax charges to the value-added. For large traders, speculating with products by storage is financially more attractive at the end of a period of market standstill than investing an equivalent amount of money in the bank. The traders cash in widely on fluctuations in production, with higher risks but also with potentially much larger returns, to the detriment of the consumer who has to pay more for their products.

¥

¥ Most food is traded in the informal sector. The usefulness of replacing the informal sector is not disputed, but there is widespread disagreement on whether to formalize to support the informal sector (see below the discussion on the place of the informal and the formal sectors).

¥

¥ c) Industrial agriculture

¥

¥ The industrial fabric is weak and only organized for export products. Rural farms and street traders only need simple processing technology to lighten the manual drudgery of the women (processing cassava, or milling cereals). This technology exists, but it is not widespread. This is why a sociological survey would be useful to understand why people are reluctant to adopt the technology, and see how to win them over. It is particularly effective to win over first of all the village head, and to convince him of the usefulness of a technology, for otherwise there is likely to be a conflict between the authority of the chiefs and the administrative agents.

¥

¥ Industries to supply the urban centres do not have to be large and/or sophisticated because the intermediate goods and services as well as maintenance are too costly. They also demand training levels for their staff that are outside their reach. What is urgently necessary is to supply the masses, cheaply, with the products that make up their staple diet (cassava paste, attiéké, corn flour, other preparations based on maize, fruits and vegetables, etc.).

¥

¥ Small-scale local industry is still in its infancy and is mainly restricted to jam or fruit and vegetable canning units. The prices of these products are not competitive, because the containers cost more than their contents.

¥

¥ **4.2.1.2 - Risks**

¥

¥ Two types of risk must be considered: risks relating to food quality and nutrition risks linked to the lack of access to food and to a balanced diet.

¥

¥ Controlling the wholesomeness and quality of food is a component of food security. Even though food is generally controlled when it enters the country, and in the slaughterhouses and on the markets, the system suffers from an acute shortage of supervisory, organizational and personnel training facilities. The existing laboratories for carrying out controls were mainly designed for export commodities but they must now be extended to cover local products. Furthermore the regulations governing them are vague and open to all kinds of interpretations. The effect of liberalization has been to transfer some of the regulations and responsibilities to the local authorities. Even though they do not have personnel properly trained to carry out checks, they nevertheless levy taxes on the markets without providing the services paid for.

¥

¥ Hygiene services manage to carry out sound control upstream of the food chain, but nothing at all downstream. Priority should be given to health checks in the slaughterhouses, the markets, and in the "maquis" and on food prepared and sold in the streets, where the recycling of perished products is commonplace. Market managers, traders and consumers have no basic knowledge about food hygiene. Market management has been transferred entirely to the local authorities, including control of the health aspects, but they have neither the facilities nor the skills to carry out this function. It is quite common for the rules to be breached and the local authorities come up against the administrative authorities. Even where inedible products are seized, there is a lack of storage facilities and places for these items to be destroyed.

¥

¥ One major difficulty in ensuring good quality control is the fact that the rules are scattered and there are so many authorities responsible for carrying out the controls: the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, etc. One might imagine one single standardization or enforcement authority, leaving implementation to the various government agencies. But the prior need for a general set of health rules, with a component dealing with food hygiene, requires a procedure lasting several years. Meanwhile, would it not be useful to have a national hygiene campaign?

¥

¥ At WAEMU level, it is planned in 1997 to examine non-coercive quality standards, accepted by operators in different countries. But for this to come about, it is necessary to find out what are the present rules, compare them, and get them accepted.

¥

¥ **4.2.2 - What is the likely future against this background?**

¥

¥ French-speaking African countries are at a crossroads in their social development. The environment seems difficult: the purchasing power is being eroded, there the economy is completely disorganized, with no-one to take over following the widespread and sudden withdrawal of government, and deregulation at every level of the food chain.

¥

¥ Paradoxically, these difficulties could provide the opportunity for a real takeoff, provided that there is also a real political will to revive the economy and guarantee the food security of the people.

¥

¥ For liberalization has make agents realize their responsibilities, forcing them to adopt

survival strategies. At the moment they can see the need to become organized and they themselves are demanding production and marketing rules so that they are no longer subject to abuses in the informal sector. Liberalization has revealed a lack of regulation or a failure to enforce them during 30 years of State monopoly.

¥

¥ Liberalization is making trade possible. West Africa has enough potential to supply food to the whole area: rice, maize, millet, sorghum, fruit, vegetables and livestock products. Without pushing each of the WAMU member countries to extreme forms of specialization (which might jeopardize the whole principle of food security) it is noteworthy that all these countries are complementary in many respects as far as food is concerned. These countries also have an undeniable commercial advantage by sharing a common currency and a common language. This is why they must remove their present contradictions: they must exploit liberalization in order to sell their products in neighbouring countries, while protecting themselves from inflows of products from those neighbours. It is common sense to bring about liberalization within the WAEMU without pushing to absurd lengths the comparative advantages and protecting regional borders. This presupposes common internal and external regulations.

¥

¥ Lastly, liberalization can make it possible to restore the confidence of the operators involved. It is noteworthy that at every level there is suspicion and a lack of trust in government information, controls, and decisions. This makes it difficult for the indispensable public services to work properly. The best evidence of this is the fact that private parallel unofficial services have been established. Restoring confidence will take time, and can only be done if the authorities show that they are competent.

¥

¥ In addition to liberalization, devaluation is also providing fresh opportunities. Even though it has reduced purchasing power due to the increased prices of imported food and intermediate goods and services, it has encouraged consumers to return towards relatively less costly local products. Feeding patterns have changed in favour of local products. It is therefore an opportunity for the economic revival of the agrifood sector. Governments must naturally control inflation, in order to prevent the benefits of devaluation being frittered away. Fortunately the free market economy has worked well, and after an initial upsurge prices have stabilized at a lower level.

¥

¥ Lastly, as far as the central issue of the programme is concerned, namely urbanization, its acceleration is causing concern because it is essential to drain off the increasing flows of goods towards these concentration points and organize distribution within the towns. Another paradoxical situation is that this situation provides an opportunity to give a boost to agriculture and trade, because it guarantees a stable market. The demand that formerly came from the countryside, which was widespread and fluctuating, could not become structural. Today there are guaranteed outlets if the quality and quantity remain stable, and indeed increase.

¥

¥ Despite appearances, the environment is wholly favourable to the food sector even though there are considerable tasks in relation to reconstruction. Measures to accompany the structural adjustment plans must be instituted rapidly otherwise private cartels are likely to be set up which will not have the same duty to ensure food security for the population that the State formerly had.

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¥

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **WHAT FOOD SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION POLICIES ARE NEEDED FOR URBAN FOOD SECURITY BY THE YEAR 2020?**

#### **5.1 - SHOULD THE CHOICE FOR URBAN SUPPLY BE BASED ON NATIONAL, REGIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES?**

The debate may be set out in the following terms: how relevant is an approach to a food security strategy for the urban populations of Sub-Saharan Africa based solely on national resources, when globalization, or regionalization as a reaction to globalization are the order of the day?

There are three points to be borne in mind. Any regulation of food and agriculture on a purely national basis is not very effective and this is shown by the substantial informal cross-border flows which regulate supplies in the region, particularly to serve the towns. Regular intra-regional trade is very small because it represents only 5% of the total exports and imports recorded in the zone. This has not improved in twenty years, despite the creation of ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States) in 1975. A number of factors explain the weakness of this trade: poor communications and transport infrastructure, a lack of market information, commercial and monetary policies that fail to incentivate, a lack of consistent regulations, excessive costs, etc. Trade outside the continent remains dominant, particularly with their former colonial countries. This trade is responsible for a substantial part of budgetary revenues and above all valuable foreign exchange which is needed to pay for the imports needed to produce, process and distribute food.

The idea of regional integration in relation to food security dates back to the '80s but the implementation of the programmes is taking place very slowly. Integration can take different forms:

- ¥ a free trade area, which involves abolishing duties and non-tariff barriers;
- ¥ a customs union which is a free trade area accompanied by a common external tariff;
- ¥ a common market, which authorizes the free circulation of inputs within the customs union;
- ¥ an economic union, which requires a harmonization of policies within a common market;
- ¥ full economic integration, with common policies implemented within a common market.
- ¥
- ¥ At the present time declarations of intent seem to be moving in the direction of an economic union, but the results are not consistent with the treaties.
- ¥
- ¥ Regional trade in food has every chance of success, because this trade is helped by a number of favourable factors:
  - ¥ a complementary ecological and climatic situation which makes it possible for complementary vegetable and livestock production to be produced in a way that diversifies and balances the diet; cereals, roots and rootcrops, truck gardening areas, extensive livestock farming, coastal fishing, oil palms, etc.;
  - ¥ the existence of very old trading networks based upon traditional social practices and



rationale, which have been able to adapt to the upheavals in the region. The intense circulation of local products across borders, the exchange of information between operators in different countries, the equalization of parallel exchange rates along a border demonstrate the existence of a trading framework which straddles national borders (Terpend, 1993);

- ¥ the artificial division of societies by frontiers, which encourages the maintenance of bonds and trading relations;
- ¥ economic and monetary policy differences, which are opportunities that the traders can exploit to their advantage. Quite clearly, within an economic union these differences would no longer exist, but the cultural aspects of trade would be revived.

The economic union should overcome a number of constraints, which demands a political will and takes time. We would like to mention in particular the constraints linked to the inadequacy of production, which curbs trade, the political fragmentation of the States, economic constraints which cause the operators to give pride of place to the most profitable crops rather than diversified food crops, transport and road and commercial infrastructure constraints, administrative constraints (different regulations, barriers, corruption), and socio-cultural constraints based on a "gerontocracy" (Terpend, 1993).

In view of the large amount of work needed to harmonize and coordinate everything in order to create this regional area at the service of food security, it is difficult to imagine it being possible in the short term. However, these areas could be conceived of as places for harmonization and the establishment of consistent food security policies.

Some writers quite rightly (Delorme, *et al.*, 1995) consider that the total opening up of the countries in the region to the world market is not favourable for the food security of these populations in the medium and the long term. Despite all the free market talk, in practice protectionism underlies the implementation (particularly with regard to product quality standards) and the African countries cannot hope to be competitive, without increasing their impoverishment and exporting urban malnutrition. The international organizations, who appear to be indifferent to regionalization, actually conceal real opposition. In most countries in the area, the legitimacy of power comes only from the State structure, and it is quite unlikely that the political authorities will overstep the threshold of a profession of faith in economic union. Under these conditions it would appear to be wiser to view regional cooperation as a useful and necessary way of opening up to the world markets in the long-term.

## **5.2 - THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND ITS INSTITUTIONS**

Today, the ways of applying liberalization are still wide open. Government, which had formerly undertaken all the functions that are indispensable for guaranteeing food security, has withdrawn almost entirely from these functions, liberalizing production, trade, consumer prices, controls and supervision, etc. But it has not adopted measures regarding the maintenance and organization of the public services which are indispensable for the smooth running of the free market economy.

Government must change its approach by moving away from the role of an economic operator and taking on a supporting and accompanying role. This change of mentality is not easy. Governments are discovering, moreover, that their agents have not been really trained for these new duties. Lastly, since governments are concerned that they no longer control the

operators they have retained a major key to the economy, namely credit. Without credit, or if credit and loans are not granted according to a planning logic or are only granted to serve the particular interests of specific lobbies or pressure groups, the economy cannot possibly be revived.

And this is precisely where the difficulty lies. How can food security be achieved in a free market environment? Private operators have no social objective, and they only go where their own interests are best served. The role of the government is to ensure that merchandise circulates freely, that the quality is good and the best final prices are charged. To do this it would seem important to pass legislation on land tenure and ownership, to invest in infrastructure (roads, water, electricity and markets) while leaving the management to the private sector whose existence it guarantees and to which it provides the information it needs for the purposes of competition, encouraging professional groups and consumer associations, and imposing regulations at every level of the food chain. The task is so huge that governments cannot do everything in the short term with the resources at their disposal. A palliative or an indispensable complementary activity would be to support the consumer, whose awareness must be enhanced.

The total withdrawal of government from intervention in the food sector is not desirable because although the recent economic turmoil has been a source of hope, it has also helped to increasingly marginalize certain areas and to impoverish certain sections of the population. The State has the duty to guarantee the food security of its people using known techniques, because if the people are not solvent the privatized system will not bother about them. They must also be localized, and their needs evaluated.

### **5.3 - DEVOLUTION OF POWER**

The decentralization of public services is the result of applying the recommendations of the structural adjustment programmes. The role of central government has therefore been slimmed down, and powers devolved to the local authorities (Gnammon-Adiko, 1997). Central governments have therefore divided up the country into various hierarchical levels, such as regions, departments or municipalities. Their powers and authority with regard to FSDS cover the implementation of infrastructure, facilities (markets and slaughterhouses) and urban roads and managing and maintaining them. They must also guarantee the smooth flow of merchandise to the points of sale, and also the health and hygiene status of the facilities. Product quality control is also their responsibility most of the time.

Urban management is concentrated primarily on actions which do not relate to food. Today, supplying sufficient food, at the lowest cost, to the towns is a priority which the authorities have not always sufficiently realized. It is true that they have often been faced with a *fait accompli*: managing flows of merchandise, markets, health and hygiene on the sites and in respect of the products, with responsibility for control and supervision, without any training being given to the staff to carry out these new tasks, and without any awareness of the great issues at stake and the difficulty of implementing new policies, and particularly without a pilot strategy.

However, while the decision to guarantee the food security of the urban populations is a declared priority, the decentralization or devolution of power and authority would appear to be necessary so that the decision-makers and managers are given the closest possible contact with the information and the beneficiaries of the FSDS policies. However it is still necessary

to clarify the powers of the local authorities in respect of the central government authorities in order not to put into place contradictory measures and to avoid *laissez-faire*, with everyone thinking that the problem that arises is not their responsibility.

#### **5.4 - HOW TO FOSTER EMPLOYMENT, AND UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS**

One of the great dilemmas facing African societies is whether to dismantle or to support the informal sector. Faced with a government monopoly and its inability to guarantee food security to all the people, a dynamic parallel economy has been created which has made it possible to provide food to backward areas and has been able to adapt extremely well to the conditions of the marginalized populations. Today it is estimated that at least half of all business activity is in the informal sector. In addition to its abilities in the area of food security, this sector has the advantage of being highly labour intensive. If rationalization is taken too far, as has happened in the developed countries, or if regulations are too severe, there is a risk that some of the flows will be eliminated and unemployment will be created.

Yet the informal sector has its own system and its own wealth, thanks to the lack of transparency of the market and disinformation, which are unsustainable conditions for any free market economy. The wide variety that exists in the informal sector extends the food chain and burdens down the end price of food. The ideal would seem to be to set up formal services which the informal sector would find beneficial to join in.

Some claim that the informal sector has given proof of its efficiency, effectiveness and adaptability. It is also highly labour-intensive. They say that it would damage food security if this were to be destructured, and that the informal sector should be supported in order to enable it to thrive. Others, however, think that no consistent system offering the best prices to consumers and producers can be set up in the informal sector. Sustaining the informal sector should not be an objective, because information, the economy and finances can never be controlled in such a system. It permits all manner of abuses and avoidance of the law. The real issue is that the system has been, and still remains, a useful means of making up for government shortcomings with regard to policies for employment, infrastructure investment, the organization of the food system and of information, and at all events government officials make a great deal of profit out of this informal system.

The most effective policy would be to make use of the organization of the informal sector in order to exploit its ability to adapt to the environment, while laying down attractive legislation and regulations while leading it to formalize itself, without taking systematically repressive measures to achieve this. This is the price to be paid for maintaining employment in the towns.

#### **5.5 - THE ROLE OF THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

The sound operation of any FSDS depends on two basic trading resources: information and credit. In view of the great shortcomings in both of these areas, producers and traders have developed a very dense network of informal relations in order to guarantee access to these resources. The result is what we might call "financial dualism".

In theory, the formal sector is related to an organized system, hinging around the urban areas, which is capable of meeting the financial requirements of the modern economy. The informal, non-institutional sector, is, in theory reserved for the rural areas with a traditional

economy and practising only marginal economic activities. The actual situation, however, seems more complex than this, and it is difficult to draw a borderline between these two sectors.

The development of the informal sector, with regard to finance, can be explained in terms of two factors:

- ¥ the first has to do with the organization of the official financial sector, which applies rules and procedures which have their origin in Europe. These procedures are very often unsuited to the local context and place considerable obstacles in the way of the people with regard to access to finance. For example, applicants must be literate, which is by no means the case for the majority of traders or producers. It takes a very long time for credit to be granted because of the complexity of the bureaucratic procedures. Lastly the costs relating to loan applications (tax stamps, bank charges, management fees) are so high that they discourage potential borrowers and encourage the banks to give priority to the applications for large loans;
- ¥ the second has to do with the extreme adaptability of the informal sector to the local environment. It is based on traditional values and practices. Operations and transactions are generally based on mutual trust as a result of personal or ethnic relationships. This means that there is natural group control over compliance with obligations. Access to finance is easier, particularly with regard to the flexibility of the transactions and the lending terms and conditions. Formalities are few, the regulations are simple, applications are handled quickly, and above all the informal sector is happy to lend small amounts. The majority of the customers are poor urban families, craftsmen and small cottage industries which frequently need short-term and even seasonal loans. Above all the amounts are small, linked to consumption and to daily needs (rent, school fees, covering the cost of particular ceremonies, etc.).

In the particular case of FSDS, donors are frequently wholesalers who have more financial resources available to them. The second type are within the group sharing the same features as the loan applicant (the same ethnic group, from the same rural origin and even the same professional activity). The third type may be an organization based on rules set down by joint agreement among the membership: an organization for collecting savings and distributing credits, such as mutual aid associations, tontines, etc.).

All the FSDS sectors will find it impossible to develop if the financial sector is unable to ensure that the institutions comprising it provide their support to a large number of private sector operators instead of merely serving a small number of organizations, mainly in the public sector.

Setting up a dynamic and innovative system for providing marketing finance is a vital problem for the formalization of the private sector. The purpose is to adapt the financing system to meet the specific features of the food trade (Terpend, 1993). What is needed is to develop financial instruments within a banking network, such as short-term, seasonal and storage loans, and medium-term loans to purchase equipment, or for constructing or improving storage facilities, etc. Their specific nature must be based on the fact that they are geared to the local situation: funds must be available as and when required at sale times, repayment conditions must be linked to sales, guarantee and collateral systems must be linked to products and not to assets or wages, and they must be based on African cultural systems (social pressure).

## 5.6 - INFORMATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

One of the main shortcomings in the urban supply system is the lack of information throughout the food chain. The lack of market transparency encourages abuse and corruption. Information circulates through the informal sector, and is highly compartmentalized.

In Burkina Faso the information systems are fairly well-developed compared with other countries, and there are five information monitoring groups:

- ¥ one on plant and livestock production, and on the physical conditions, reporting to DESAP;
- ¥ one on storage and market price monitoring, reporting to SONAGES. The SIM (Market Information System) was set up in 1990, and works on a sample of 29 markets which was recently enlarged to cover 37. On each market, an enumerator collects the information on a weekly basis and submits it to the central unit. A report is regularly sent out to the national institutions and donors. Even though this system is well-designed it only identifies the prices on the market and the retail prices, but not producer prices nor the intermediate prices;
- ¥ one monitoring at-risk zones: an early warning system, reporting to CT/CCI;
- ¥ one monitoring grain consumption, reporting to INS;
- ¥ one monitoring technological research policies jointly with CEDRES.

These elaborate systems are certainly interested in becoming acquainted with the food chain, but their objective is not always clear: the information is not fed back to the people working in the circuits, and only seem to be for the exclusive use of government in order to take emergency measures, which suggests to the operators that it is solely used as a means of controlling them. Consequently, parallel private information networks are being created, which inspire greater confidence in the operators (the SIM information broadcast by radio is only listened to by 15%). Furthermore the information is supplied raw, without any analysis.

Thus the information must pass through the markets (this is one of the main functions of market price lists) but in order to be taken as a benchmark, a certain critical mass is needed. It must be organized in such a way that negotiations can take place on the markets and they can therefore become more effective. This is the area which falls within the scope of government, so that it does not become an object of power. But it must be designed for the operators, and not solely for the government.

## CHAPTER 6

### FSDS development policies for the year 2020

#### 6.1 - A METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR DEFINING FSDS DEVELOPMENT POLICIES FOR FOOD SECURITY

For this methodological framework we are deliberately considering a food security-based approach as an alternative to policies based on fundamental economic equilibria, in which food security is just one of the means of human development. In order to understand at what level this approach is being discussed, it is necessary to be clear about the notions of strategy, planning, policy and project:

- ¥ a strategy is a consistent set of hypotheses and assumptions, defining the methods, periods, means and conditions to obtain specific objectives (Malassis & Ghersi, 1992);
- ¥ a plan is designed to programme a set of means over the medium and long term;
- ¥ a policy is a set of short-term management instruments at the disposal of a government in order to attain its objectives;
- ¥ a project is an action which implements a strategy or programme at the microeconomic level.

If the national strategy consists of achieving urban food security, the constituent elements of food security must be reached: food must be available at all times and in all places, it must be accessible to all individuals, and vulnerability and risk must be reduced. The means used are a set of policies, programmes and projects.

There are four different stages in the construction of a food security strategy: diagnosis, forecast, choices, and programmes and projects.

In addition to this there is an ongoing background phase throughout, namely monitoring and evaluation. This enables the decision-makers to tailor the choices and to ensure that the programmes evolve.

#### Figure 3

##### Defining a policy in terms of strategic planning

(Source: Griffon, Henry & Lemelle, 1991)

##### a) Diagnosis

This is of decisive importance, because it is designed to highlight the largest possible number of problems affecting food supply and distribution, as well as the environment. In the specific framework of the urban environment, the following are the main ones (Azoulay & Dillon, 1993):

- ¥ analysing the present and future population structure. The main indicators to be analysed are: the number of inhabitants, the growth rate, ages and occupations, migration flows, household size and type, types of employment, part-time work and

- full-time work, unemployment, etc.;
- ¥ evaluating the dietary and nutritional status. In order to design policies to improve FSDS for food security, it is essential to know the nutritional status and the feeding patterns of the population;
- ¥ identifying the structures (agents, flows) of the urban food system and quantifying the flows in physical and monetary terms. The food system may be analysed in terms of two complementary approaches: a functional analysis by sector of activity or an analysis by commodity. The first consists of analysing the functions which are involved in meeting the food requirements: agriculture and livestock farming, food and beverage production, formal and informal trade (with foreign countries, with the rural world, within the urban environment itself) and all the allied industries and services which are intermediate consumers in these sectors. The second is particularly well-suited for sub-Saharan economies which are characterized by weak product diversification and little interbranch trade. The commodity-based analysis relates to all the social, commercial and financial relations between all the stages of the food chain for a specific commodity (Montigaud, 1992);
- ¥ identifying food security problems relating to food availability, stability, risks and vulnerability and lack of access. The aim here is to emphasize the malfunctioning in the FSDS which limit the level of satisfaction of the various population groups. The factors to be considered are set out in Table 2;
- ¥ identifying policies already adopted in FSDS;
- ¥ identifying the macroeconomic policies undertaken. These determine price formation and the way in which the markets are organized. According to Azoulay and Dillon there are six benchmark models, each of which expresses one particular notion of development and hence of objectives. The diagnosis makes it possible to establish which model the country under study follows. Here are the six models:
- ¥                               disconnection; strong border protection, guaranteed prices and a stable domestic market;
- ¥                               the regional market; disconnection between domestic prices and world prices; prices are liberalized within a protected regional market;
- ¥                               price stabilization; domestic prices and world prices are linked, strong public intervention to stabilize prices;
- ¥                               priority to consumption; domestic prices and world prices are linked, consumption highly subsidized;
- ¥                               integration into the world market; domestic and world prices very closely linked, public intervention limited to promoting private trade and supporting vulnerable groups;
- ¥                               total integration into the world market; a total linkage between domestic and world prices, minimum public intervention, no protection; constraints are evaluated for the application of policies under FSDS.

## b) Forecasting

This must make it possible to look objectively at the immediate problems, identify the development of the locomotive variables, to envisage imbalances and potential break and hence be in a good position for long-term integration into decision-making. It clarifies the priorities and shows up the choices for the third phase. The forecasting analysis cannot be separated from the notion of security because its aim is to preempt risks and reduce uncertainty. It takes up the factors analysed in the diagnosis.

### c) Choices

The approach will be pragmatic; for a whole set of measures, one examines the economic and social repercussions on all the parties involved, on the national accounts, and the different macroeconomic aggregates. In the particular case of urban food security, the consequences on the constituent elements of urban security for town dwellers are simulated, taking account of the macroeconomic, social and ecological effects, as well as the effects on the rural environment.

The practice followed by classical economists is to give pride of place to choices which have the most advantageous cost benefit or cost/efficiency ratio. With regard to food security, people lie at the centre of development and efficiency criteria have to be taken into consideration in addition to purely economic criteria. According to our analyses (Padilla, 1996), a policy can only be expected to have any results if it is economically efficient, if it is not unfavourable to the local agricultural sector, if it is part of the pursuit for equity and if it encourages food security.

This phase specifies all the possible solutions to be implemented in time, short-term regulation, medium-term programming and long-term structural actions. Then it will be necessary to select the technically and administratively feasible solutions, and choose the ones which offer the best comparative advantages which the budgetary constraints make affordable.

The construction of a strategy is not something fixed once and for all, and it becomes recurrent in terms of the results of the ongoing diagnosis. Politics are adjusted to the effects obtained by the initial decisions in order to achieve the final objective. Hence the fundamental importance of this monitoring and evaluation phase. And this is only possible where there is an enlarged food security information and management system.

## **6.2 - THE NEED FOR CLARITY IN GOVERNMENT OBJECTIVES**

Before urban food distribution and supply systems can be developed, a number of fundamental dilemmas facing government must be resolved. For no strategy can be implemented unless there is a clear objective of society or consistent objectives. These dilemmas relate mainly to four points: food security and equity v. the drastic reduction in government expenditure; the control of the private sector v. total liberalization; market stabilization v. pricing freedom, and commercial and immediate distribution effectiveness v. long-term market development.

The choices which the government has to take must be clearly and publicly spelled out, because any uncertainty regarding government intention will limit acceptance of the measures by the parties involved in the food chain. A climate of suspicion and the fear of repression does not create the best conditions for a free market economy.

### **6.2.1 - Food security or economism?**

Ten years of economic structural adjustment policies have brought out contradictions between the aim of establishing a balance and restructuring, and the aims of development and food security. Experience has shown that the instruments used for adjustment do not help to reduce poverty or to raise the living standards of the people or guarantee a more egalitarian distribution of incomes or protect the environment. The World Bank's position, namely, that



impoverishment and economic difficulties are only temporary, has been contradicted by experience. This being so the IBRD and the IMF have tried to sweeten the reforms by taking account of the social dimensions of adjustment (the launching of the 1988 and 1990 SDA programme, to which 27 African countries belonged). But this easing has not been translated into deeds, and even though food security is set out in the programmes it is in reality diluted because of the greater financial and economic concerns. How much longer can food security be put off, particularly in the towns where the poor are increasing in numbers and are becoming isolated, and where grassroots opposition is emerging, in the name of rebalancing the economies? Another path would reverse the preconditions and give priority to improving human resources as a condition for growth recovery in the framework of rigorous management of organizations and policies. But this requires a consensus and a general commitment to the objectives (Azoulay & Dillon, 1993).

If governments wish to foster food security they must accept that the agents in the food chain work according to profitability rules. Food security measures that have to do with social actions must be incorporated into the budget and managed in a way that does not discourage the private sector.

### **6.2.2 - Control of the private sector v. total liberalization**

The liberalization of the FSDS plays a prominent part in recent reforms. Governments see the control of urban supplies as an essential factor of political stability and are often reluctant to give up these prerogatives. The linkage between the private sector and government conditions the chances of success of any privatization programme. The government lays down the rules, but if they are too restrictive or too changeable, the private sector will get round them and remain in the informal sector.

Although it is natural for governments to be kept informed about the operation and the flows taking place under FSDS, it is unlikely that overly repressive regulation will encourage their development. The role of government is to lay down a stable regulatory framework which clearly spells out the rights and obligations of the consumers, distributors and producers. But the regulations must be more incentivating and less repressive in order to motivate all the parties to comply.

### **6.2.3 - Market stabilization v. pricing freedom**

The total liberalization of food pricing, following a long period of stringent controls and support policies, inevitably leads to a price explosion. In order to avoid restricting the purchasing power of the people too much, it is necessary to have a minimum degree of market stabilization. However, the level and the procedures for implementing stabilization measures affect the operation of the market.

Authorized price ranges give some margin of manoeuvre to the private sector. But they must be sufficiently open-ended to be able to take account of production and distribution cost variations during the course of the year. If the ceiling prices are such that commercial activities are no longer profitable, the commodities will be sold off on the parallel markets. The capacity of a country to stabilize food prices depends on changes in production, the effectiveness and the cost of the distribution systems, and on how much it is ready to pay for storage or for imports. If there is a poor appreciation of the price stabilization level, the government is likely to create uncertainty and discover private enterprise. A realistic stabilization policy can eventually lead to a reduction in food costs as the private sector

extends its presence on the market (Thomson & Terpend, 1993).

#### **6.2.4 - Immediate distribution and commercial effectiveness v. long-term market development**

A free market-oriented government, which is still not over concerned about putting into place a new system for running the economy, relies on the "natural" organization of the parties acting on the market and on their ability to manage the flow of commodities and to distribute them in different districts in the town. It is true that in countries where informal commercial practices have been kept despite centralized planning of the systems, the trading spirit has remained and there has been a rapid adaptation to the disorganization of the systems, conversely to what has occurred where these practices have been completely forgotten.

Concern for short-term effectiveness in terms of the spatial and quantitative dissemination of foods in the towns, without considering prices, quality and product losses, would require the legal authorities to encourage this informal sector. However it is worthwhile examining the question of guaranteeing the development of SADAs over the long term, and it raises once again the whole issue of maintaining or dissolving the informal sector (see above).

#### **6.3 - A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH IS NEEDED TO SET UP PROGRAMMES AND ESTABLISH THE FOOD ECONOMY APPROACH**

The whole issue of food is a complex phenomenon, and is a social fact, which can involve both material and non-material activities in any society. The need to view it in terms of earth sciences, life sciences, human and social sciences, as well as economics, justifies the adoption of a systemic and multi-disciplinary approach. The demographer, historian, anthropologist, sociologist, economist, jurist, and the marketing and communications specialist all have a place in the process of examining urban FSDS and how they relate to food security. It is obvious that the multi-disciplinary policy-making unit must necessarily be small, and should be run by generalists who are able to draw on specialists to deal with specific issues. Multi-disciplinary approaches are not easy. They require the persons representing different disciplines to work together on a strictly equal footing, and there should be no feeling of superiority by the so-called exact scientists over the practitioners of the human sciences (De Garine, 1991).

In the course of our investigations we have been able to see that situations and cultures vary extremely widely. It would appear to be impossible, in order to foster an improvement in fresh food distribution and supply systems to operate from too high a general level and to be content with national data which tone down the local features which are necessary specifically to design realistic action. Thorough analysis is necessary for any political measure. Admittedly the research required is amateurish, but it is less costly to devote a whole year to studies preliminary to policy and then to gather together all the elements which will make it possible to carry out a later evaluation than it is to become hastily involved into a poorly conceived programme, to simulate its effectiveness, when this fails to attract the parties concerned to join in it.

Any political decision or action needs an understanding the environment before being implemented in order to forecast the results of the decision and evaluate its impact at every level. Traditional microeconomic and macroeconomic approaches are quite inadequate to provide an understanding of the real situation. It is much more than a mere juxtaposition of isolated agents. Domination and complementarity exist and must be brought out. This same

reality is difficult to describe in terms of trading accounts whose purpose is not to observe the behaviour of the agents involved. The agrifood approach (Malassis, 1992) which places the consumer and meeting the consumer's needs at the heart of the problem and examines the relations that exist between all the elements in the food chain (a systemic approach) seems to us to be the most appropriate form of preliminary analysis before any policy decision is taken. Sound coordination of these elements and these joint actions both upstream and downstream is indispensable if the food system and food security are to be developed. Let us look at this approach a little more closely.

We use the term "food system" to refer to all the activities in a particular society which form part of the function of feeding that society. The activities which make it possible to take on this function are essentially the following: acquiring food raw materials by acquisition (food collection) or by production (agriculture), processing the food raw materials into foodstuffs (artisanally or industrially), distributing the food in space (transfer) and in time (storage), the culinary preparation of foodstuffs so that they can be consumed, and lastly consumption itself.

The activities of acquiring, processing, distributing, preparing and consuming may take place in a domestic unit or in a great many socio-economic units, as a result of the social division of labour. In the latter case, the operation of the system is regulated by a specific system.

The food system is therefore also the way in which men organize themselves to obtain and consume their food.

We use the term "food chain" to refer to the sequence of activities ranging from obtaining the raw material to the final act of consuming it. We use the term "food channel" to denote the sequence of operations relating to a particular commodity or to a category of specific commodities.

The system is characterized by the specific organization of the functions which it performs. It reflects the overall socio-economic system (an economically developed or less developed society, centrally planned, free market, or mixed economy, etc.).

The originality of the approach of agrifood economists lies in the fact that they base their analysis not on a sectoral but on a systemic approach. The application of a systemic analysis makes it possible to subsequently examine the purpose of the system, to identify this system within the global economy, to analyse its structure and if necessary to develop any sub-systems, sub-sectors and types of enterprises, and to establish the flows which are created between these sub-systems, sub-sectors and enterprises, and examine the regulatory mechanisms for these flows and evaluate the performance of the system.

#### **Figure 4** **The agrifood system and its operations**

The "objective" of all food systems is to ensure that the target population is provided with all the daily food they need to meet their requirements. The optimum system should meet needs at the level and with nutritional balance that are defined by nutritionists, and must also satisfy them in terms of their cultural needs, at the lowest social cost.

The "structure of the system" consists of the agents or the elementary structures combined into sub-systems; the relations between them and between each one of them and the whole system is then studied. For each case, one identifies their activities and their function. If one

is capable of doing so, it is necessary to classify the elements and the relations in the following manner:

- ¥ contractual relations a
- ¥ market relations b
- ¥ mutual agreements c
- ¥ zero relations d
- ¥ industrial enterprises 1
- ¥ family-run industrial enterprises 2
- ¥ artisanal enterprises 3
- ¥ self-consuming units 4

One can then bring out four sub-systems:

- ¥ the industrial sub-system composed of type 1 with type a relations;
- ¥ the semi-industrial sub-system composed of type 2 units with type b relations;
- ¥ the artisanal sub-system composed of type 3 units, with type c relations;
- ¥ the autarchic sub-system composed of type 4 units, with type d relations.
- ¥ The inter-branch, inter-sectoral and inter-unit "flows" relate to all the transfers which are established between all the sub-sets thus defined. These transfers may be of different kinds: transfers of commodities, securities, capital, intermediate consumption items, energy, information, etc.
- ¥ The "regulation system" refers to the adjustment mechanisms which make the food system able to function, and in the best possible case, enabling it to reach its objectives. In order to understand the regulatory system it is necessary firstly to identify the command centres: these are the essential constraints which cannot be avoided. The approach consists of identifying these centres (they may differ depending upon the commodity), describe the mechanisms for transmitting the orders for each, and analysing the consequences on the whole system. It is then necessary to identify the cores of social, technical or economic constraints which appear at specific points in the food chain. Lastly, it is necessary to dwell on the regulation points and the feedback loops accompanying them. These are elements or mechanisms which make it possible for the system to operate and adapt. Government intervention is manifested in terms of regulations that define a system of constraints (organizing markets, prices, structures, regulatory or financial aspects, etc.) within which the system is regulated in order to survive or to produce surpluses.
- ¥ The performance of a system may be evaluated by traditional market economy criteria (sectoral productivity, cost/benefits, etc.) or measured in terms of their ability to guarantee food security to the largest number of people in the population. The battery of relevant indicators which make it possible to carry out this evaluation on the basis of food security still needs to be created.

#### ¥ **6.4 - THE NEED FOR FOOD SECURITY SURVEILLANCE AND FSDDS EVALUATION SYSTEMS**

- ¥ Putting in place an urban food security strategy forming part of a process for developing FSDDS requires continual diagnostics. It must form part of a programme of political measures and investment. For what is the point of measures unless their impact can

be evaluated and the development of the FSDS environment and their component parts can be monitored? How can one be sure that the policy being implemented is always the optimum one? It is true that these procedures are costly and that present and future budgetary restrictions thwart any hope of putting into place these indispensable tools. But is this not an opportunity for the developed countries to do something useful in their programmes for aiding African countries?

¥

¥ There are already a certain number of information systems that can be partially used, if they were made consistent with one another (international information systems, market information systems, information provided by NGOs, early warning systems, nutrition surveillance systems). The basic problem is that none of these systems has been designed in order to provide an understanding of food security within the urban environment. Most of the existing information systems are geared to observing agriculture and the nutritional problems found in the rural environment. The urban environment is still very rarely the subject of consumer behavioural studies, and the factors that explain their food security. Very often analyses of food flows stop at the town gates. The spatial distribution of commodities in the towns, the breakdowns in supplies, the conditions of access to foodstuffs and the quality of these commodities should be more systematically analysed.

¥

¥ Parallel to the urban food security food surveillance system, it is indispensable to put into place a system for evaluating the policies being implemented to improve the FSDS.

¥ Let it not be forgotten that this system is supposed to measure the economic efficiency of policies, their impact on the levels of equity within the population, their repercussions on the effectiveness of agriculture and their impact on the food security of urban households.

¥

## ¥ CHAPTER 7

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## ¥ CONCLUSIONS

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¥ In the '90s, and thereafter, it is likely that short-term emergency management will remain the major concern of governments in Sub-Saharan Africa. Polarized by economic and financial equilibria, governments forget the essential element to the sustainability of their societies: the food security of their people. As a source of social peace, it must be associated with the right to health, education, employment and a high-quality environment. Is this security compatible with the complete liberalization of society which no longer knows how it works, and with the incorporation of fragile and vulnerable societies into a world economy governed by competition driven by rationalization and quality? Is African society doomed to adopt this rationality in which it will lose its identity? Or rather will it have the political will to take the security of its peoples as its goal?

¥

¥ As a general rule, governments seem to have a confused idea about food security and manage the short term in a state of contradiction without looking further ahead. They seem to be more anxious to keep to the liberalization timetable than to set up a new economic system. No deliberate choice has been made of any one of the different ways of guaranteeing food security. The only certainties are that they are seeking to improve their own supplies and possibly also an export market within the WAMU.

¥

¥ Is African society politically motivated and ready to exploit the convergence of events that favour a real economic take-off, and are the donors ready to run the risks involved in ensuring that investments remain in the country, and for the country?

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