

# The Politics of Food Security in Nigeria

The poverty changer

# What is Food Security in modern society

- ▶ People are considered food secure when they have availability and adequate access at all times to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life. Food security analysts look at the combination of the following three main elements:

- ▶ Food availability:

Food must be available in sufficient quantities and on a consistent basis. It considers stock and production in a given area and the capacity to bring in food from elsewhere, through trade or aid.

Food access:

People must be able to regularly acquire adequate quantities of food, through purchase, home production, barter, gifts, borrowing or food aid.

- ▶ Food utilization:

Consumed food must have a positive nutritional impact on people. It entails cooking, storage and hygiene practices, individuals health, water and sanitations, feeding and sharing practices within the household.

# Defining food security

- ▶ Food security as a concept originated only in the mid-1970s, in the discussions of international food problems at a time of global food crisis. The initial focus of attention was primarily on food supply problems - of assuring the availability and to some degree the price stability of basic foodstuffs at the international and national level. That supply-side, international and institutional set of concerns reflected the changing organization of the global food economy that had precipitated the crisis. A process of international negotiation followed, leading to the World Food Conference of 1974, and a new set of institutional arrangements covering information, resources for promoting food security and forums for dialogue on policy issues
- ▶ The 1996 World Food Summit adopted a still more complex definition:

“Food security, at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels [is achieved] when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”.<sup>[30]</sup>

- ▶ This definition is again refined in The State of Food Insecurity 2001:

“Food security [is] a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life

- ▶ **Food security** exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Household food security is the application of this concept to the family level, with individuals within households as the focus of concern.
- ▶ **Food insecurity** exists when people do not have adequate physical, social or economic access to food as defined above.

# Food inequality

- ▶ There is a huge gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' when it comes to the distribution of food around the world. Around 1 billion people do not have enough to eat. This crisis currently kills more people than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined<sup>1</sup>. In stark contrast, around 1.5 billion people in the Western world are classified as overweight, around a third of whom are obese<sup>2</sup>. The situation is challenging efforts to achieve the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger<sup>3</sup>. Small-scale livestock farming plays a vital role in developing countries, contributing to the wellbeing of more than 800 million poor smallholders<sup>4</sup>. Large-scale factory farming is actually compounding the food crisis.

# Agriculture and Food Production

- ▶ Sustainable food production is a critical component to meeting the demands and challenges faced by agriculture worldwide. IFPRI's research in this area includes looking at emerging food and agricultural technologies that can advance food and nutrition security. Innovations in improved natural resource management policies, climate and energy policies, bio-safety systems, property rights, and collective action are a top focus. Research also includes analyses that can help preempt and discern future threats to food and nutrition security and make certain that scarce budgetary resources are directed toward development priorities that achieve the highest impact.

# Conflict and Food Security

- ▶ The relationship between conflict and food security is complex and dynamic. As recent IFPRI research has shown, food insecurity can be both a cause and consequence of conflict. Conflict often reduces food availability and access when agricultural production and markets are disrupted. And food insecurity can trigger an array of responses, from food riots to revolution. Whatever the cause, many millions of people and children are affected, and a large proportion of those affected can become refugees. If not coordinated and supported well, refugees can cause further instability when crossing borders, including rising food and nutrition insecurity. IFPRI researchers are working to solve this vicious cycle by identifying conflict triggers—from climate change and price fluctuations to natural disasters and weak government structures—that can help inform food security policies and programs as well as to develop food security strategies that can increase resilience.

# Governance

- ▶ Sound institutions and good governance are central to improving agricultural productivity and reducing rural poverty, hunger, and malnutrition.
- ▶ Governance refers to how power and authority is used to manage the collective affairs of a community, society, nation, or country. Institutions are the systems of formal and informal rules that enable the development of policies, cooperation, and innovation. Both concepts are equally important for promoting civic participation in political affairs, mutual accountability between leaders and citizens, and responsible natural resource management.

# Growing the Agriculture Sector in Nigeria

- ▶ There are good reasons for the present administration to focus on agriculture. First, it is a sector with high growth prospects, particularly if value chains can be developed that turn raw commodities into processed goods for domestic consumption or export. Second, although agriculture already employs more than 70 percent of the population, there are opportunities to expand both the number and variety of jobs in the sector by making it easier and more attractive to farm. In addition, by diversifying the agriculture sector, it can be made more appealing to a vast youth population that is turned off by farming but might be attracted to processing, marketing, and other business opportunities along the value chain
- ▶ Finally, the food emergency in northeast Nigeria brought on by the Boko Haram insurgency and the government's response to it has underlined the importance of expanding the agriculture sector in order to advance food security and nutrition.

# Progress Made

- ▶ The demise of Nigeria's agriculture sector from independence to the present day, has been a fundamental cause for Nigeria's food insecurity over the years. But in most recent time, initial steps were taken to revive agricultural production under the president Goodluck Jonathan administration, through one of the signature initiatives of former agriculture minister (and current president of the African Development Bank), Dr Akinwunmi Adesina, which was to reform and streamline the agricultural input system to ensure that farmers received subsidized fertilizer in a timely fashion via credits delivered to their mobile phones. The Growth Enhancement Support (GES) scheme succeeded in reaching more farmers, but the quantities of fertilizer delivered to recipients were inadequate and corruption continued to bedevil the program.