

**Food Security and  
Agriculture Committee**  
Established: 1998

**MEMBERSHIP**

**UN:** FAO; UNDP; WFP;  
World Bank

**NGOs:** Christian Aid;  
Christian Relief and  
Development Association  
(CRDA); Concern; German  
Agro Action (GAA);  
Farm Africa; International  
Federation of Red Cross and  
Red Crescent Societies  
(IFRC); Irish Catholic Agency  
(TROCA-IRE); Oxfam;  
Save the Children Fund UK

**Donors:** Austrian  
Development Cooperation  
(OAD); Canadian International  
Development Agency (CIDA);  
Department for International  
Development of UK (DFID);  
European Commission (EC);  
German Agency for  
Technical Cooperation (GTZ);  
Italian Cooperation;  
Japanese International  
Cooperation Agency (JICA);  
Swiss Agency for  
Development and  
Cooperation (SDC); US  
Agency for International  
Development (USAID);  
Embassies of Belgium,  
Finland, France, Germany,  
Ireland, Israel; Netherlands,  
Sweden

**Past activities:** Study on  
Ethiopian Food Security  
Reserve (EFSR); Preparation  
of Ethiopia's food security  
programmes (World Bank-led  
mission); coordination of  
follow-up actions, including  
review of mission report for  
submission to Government  
for comment.

# Ethiopia



IFAD/F. MATTOU

## Supporting poverty reduction efforts

Progress in reducing poverty can only be achieved if action is focused on its most extreme manifestations – hunger and food insecurity.

In Ethiopia, the Food Security and Agriculture Committee (FSAC) represents the Network Thematic Group for Rural Development and Food Security in the country and it is working towards ensuring that the full spectrum of hunger and

food insecurity are reflected in the country's on-going efforts to reduce poverty.

The Committee meets once a month and has dealt mostly with food aid issues. In 2000, for example, it was actively involved in discussing the Emergency Appeal of the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) for food aid to populations affected by droughts and those internally displaced as a result of Ethiopia's conflict with Eritrea. The Committee's various meetings with Government dealt primarily with food aid commitments by the donors; delivery schedules; government contributions; local availability of food grains and purchase; and amounts that could be borrowed from the Ethiopian Food Security Reserve.

**// Ethiopia with its 65 million inhabitants with an average per capita income of US\$ 100 is one of the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Skewed distribution of income leaves about 60 percent of the population below the poverty line. On the Human Development Index (HDI) of UNDP, Ethiopia ranks nearly at the bottom, 171st out of 174 countries, just above Burkina Faso, the Niger and Sierra Leone. According to an FAO estimate, about 51 percent of the population is undernourished and over two million people are considered to be chronically food insecure.**

FROM 'SPECIAL REPORT -  
FAO/WFP CROP AND FOOD SUPPLY ASSESSMENT MISSION TO ETHIOPIA', 9 JANUARY 2001



This focus on food aid complements past work undertaken by the Committee on Food Security in Ethiopia: a study and analysis of the role, size and structure of the Ethiopian Food Security Reserve (EFSR); and the coordination of, and follow-up to a World Bank-led multi-donor mission to the country to formulate a Food Security Programme for Ethiopia. The Committee has also acted as a forum for presentations and briefings by agencies on food security related topics and has recently studied the Public Expenditure Review (PER) which advocates that food security be included in the National Budget.

It is as a result of this comprehensive knowledge and understanding of food issues that the Committee has been recently requested to prepare inputs on food security for Ethiopia's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). This document is needed in order for the country to receive debt relief under the Heavily-Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. The Committee's first step in the process will be to review the Government's Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

This mid-term paper – submitted to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in September 2000 – was prepared after little consultation with civil society, NGOs or bilateral donors. It was considered to have insufficient coverage of food insecurity problems and there were concerns about the weak links between food insecurity and the policies outlined in the paper. In view of the persistent food insecurity in Ethiopia – frequently exacerbated by severe drought – it was recommended by IMF and the World Bank that a comprehensive food security strategy be developed within the full Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

The Committee has a rich collective experience and its involvement in preparations for the Paper will involve agreeing, refining and feeding specific and coherent policy messages into the process in a participatory manner with both donors and civil society. A small self-selected task force has been set up to draw as much as possible upon the Committee's previous discussions and work.

## What are Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)?

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) are necessary for countries to receive debt relief under the Heavily-Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.

Launched by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and supported by the G-8 (Group of most industrialized countries), the HIPC constitutes a comprehensive approach to reduce external debt of the world's poorest, most heavily-indebted countries and places debt relief within an overall framework of poverty reduction.

Eligible HIPCs are expected to implement sustained, integrated poverty reduction and economic reform programmes, and they must submit a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). However, the first series of these PRSPs has lacked appropriate coverage of agriculture and rural development.

PRSPs describe a country's macro-economic, structural and social policies and programmes to promote growth and reduce poverty, as well as associated external financing needs. The PRSPs are prepared by governments through a participatory process involving civil society and development partners, including the World Bank and the IMF.



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Examples of areas on which the task force focuses include:

#### **Concepts**

- National self-sufficiency will not necessarily reduce food insecurity. The problem is more one of access to food than national availability of food (though the latter can also be an issue).
- The importance of distinguishing between chronic and acute food insecurity, and related institutional mandates and responses. Food insecurity in Ethiopia is largely structural and chronic, rather than transient and acute, and is a facet of poverty.
- Famine develops as a process – not a sudden event.
- The need to recognize multi-dimensional livelihood strategies for food security.
- Agriculture will not be enough given the limitations on production of many food-insecure households.

#### **Experiences**

- Fifteen years of food aid in Ethiopia has not addressed the root causes of hunger or reduced malnutrition. Something needs to change.
- Food aid and food security expenditure has not been included in the Public Expenditure Review (PER). This has prevented advance planning and integration with other development expenditure.

#### **Policy recommendations**

- Work towards including food security expenditure within the annual Public Expenditure Review (PER).
- Clarification of responsibilities at regional and federal level for dealing with chronic/acute food insecurity.
- Development and implementation of an assessment process that distinguishes between chronic and acute food insecurity.

A matrix has been prepared which reflects the food security concept and policy discussed in the Interim-PRSP, the Government's Food Security Strategy and the experiences and work in which the members of the Committee have been involved.

This policy work is a crucial first step in ensuring that the past and on-going efforts undertaken by national partners in food security are reflected in the country's PRSP and that it, in turn, has a decisive impact on the food insecure and vulnerable in Ethiopia.