

The Planet Earth

Agriculture and Food Security

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How can the poor be protected against massive price rises of food products resulting from shortages, natural disasters and speculation? How can food security be improved by increasing accessibility of food supply? Is there an effective early warning system to anticipate and prevent future food crises?

Problem Definitions

How can the poor be protected against massive price rises of food products resulting from shortages, natural disasters and speculation?

Summary of Solutions suggested

There are poor people in most countries, but this input focuses on the most malignant concentration of poverty namely LDCs and Low Income DCs

1. Agree on waiver/Exemption for LDCs when food exporting countries might again restrict their food exports as was case during the food crisis in 2008

2. Agree to set up buffer stocks in the region most vulnerable during food crises, ensure food stocks are purchased from LDCs food producers and buffer stocks are managed effectively and free of political rent seeking

3. Reassess IFIs policy advise on agriculture in LDCs and LI-DCs, such as liberalizing tariffs, collapse of local production, dependence on food imports to be paid by scarce financial resources (e.g Haiti, Ghana, etc)

4. Control speculation by regulating food competition rules at global levels (85% of agricultural trade is in the hands of five TNCs)

Action required

Distinction is made between Trade Solutions within WTO rules and non-trade solutions outside WTO rules

WTO membership should add such clause into Doha Agreement

Joint leadership by ECA and AfDB with support from FAO

Independent Evaluation Unit, not located at WB or IMF or other IOs but more alike the IPCC for CC

G-20 to agree to set up a watch dog institution and to agree on relevant sanctions in case of collusive cartel formation

Problem Definitions

How can food security be improved by increasing accessibility of food supply?

Summary of Solutions suggested

There are mid-term and long-term solutions to this stated problem

1. ODA support for Agriculture dropped from 13% to 3.4% (1980-2004, and DCs correspondingly decreased budget for agricultural development)

2. Farmers in LDCs/LI DCs should be given better access to credit, seeds, fertilizers, insurance schemes and market information

3. Find complementary counterweight to EPAs which require LDCs to agree to reciprocal concessions (end of unilateral preferential tariffs), counterweight could e.g. be by developing a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for Africa

4. Provide negotiation and policy space by letting LDCs reconsider their bound rates in agricultural sector, such flexibility could help them re-build their agricultural sector taking into account development options similar to Japan, S. Korea, Taiwan, China, Switzerland, etc.

Problem Definitions

Summary of Solutions suggested

5. The great majority of LDCs/LI-DCs are non-formal economies with high unemployment and low skilled work force. Support should be given to help these countries move up the supply and value chain, create meaningful institutions, and attract FDI that helps them move up the development ladder

6. In order to increase efficiency of agricultural production, reduce wasteful use of non-renewable energy sources, limit wasteful use of water resources, millions of subsistence farmers have to be helped to move to townships and cities. In order to prevent this internal migration to become a move from one form of poverty to another form of poverty (rural to urban), governments and international community have to invest massively into physical and social infrastructure

7. Agricultural producers in LDCs/LI DCs should be supported to better face SPS and free themselves from constraining private standards used by food TNCs to limit commercial options and bind producers to specific buyers at low value added level

Action required

WTO members should consider a new generation of TRIMS+ focused on the agricultural sector of LDCs and LI-DCs which would allow them to make incoming agro related FDI more based on local content production, commercial partnerships and PPP in economic and social sector as well as compliant with climate change prerogatives (extension of Global Compact)

G-20 and Grand Scheme of Governance Coherence between WTO/DDA; CC-UNFCCC, Biodiversity, IMO
In other words, meta-multilateral agreement is needed allowing for trade offs between different issues/agreements and parties. Single multilateral agreements are no longer sustainable without a comprehensive meta-level agreement

WTO members should agree to limit use of mandatory private standards used by leading TNCs to control local suppliers



Problem Definitions

Is there an effective early warning system to anticipate and prevent future food crises?

Summary of Solutions suggested

Warning system means having reliable information gathering systems in countries, regions and on planetary levels

1. Early Warning systems by satellite based high technology exists already allowing to detect under ground water catchment areas, but also to anticipate signs of drought and deforestation, these valuable high technology warning systems should be made as transparent as possible and also based on capacity building in countries so that they are less dependent, hence less reactive in their own management of these multi-sector crises

2. Key countries often pursue different if not contradictory strategies in international organizations (e.g. negotiation position in WTO on TRIPS and TK vs. negotiation position in Convention on Biological Diversity). Some of these contradictions negatively impact the resolve of international community to help DCs and LDCs in agriculture development

Action required

For warning systems to work, information gathering technology should be shared to avoid new dependencies

Early Warning Centre with active participation of ITU and ICCP but independent of political patronage or obligations

Creation of an Observatoire which follows key countries positions at various Int. Organisations including key countries FTA agreements, Investment agreements (BIT) and their positions at Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) institutions. Such Observatoire should be independent from G-20 and from UN trade cluster IOs

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