

THE MISSING INGREDIENTS FOR GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

Save the Children's calls to the G20 in 2011

In 2010 G20 leaders committed to the Seoul Development Consensus for Shared Growth. Leaders recognised the disproportionate impact of the global economic crisis on the most vulnerable – particularly women and children – in the poorest countries and committed to an Action Plan to achieve inclusive growth in developing countries. One year later, with food prices reaching record levels, many of these countries are grappling with food crises, East Africa being a current and extreme example. This crisis has demonstrated the urgent need to advance food security and nutrition to prevent such emergencies in the future.

But the truth is that this crisis was predicted – and preventable: we already have the knowledge to stop this kind of tragedy from unfolding; we know the steps that must be taken to prevent suffering on this scale. We all have a responsibility to prevent this from ever happening again.

The international community must follow through on previous commitments to long-term efforts that would prevent such emergencies in the future. After the 2007/08 food crisis, world Leaders made significant commitments to addressing food security in the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI) in 2009, but in 2011 these commitments remain unfulfilled.

The food crisis is not limited to East Africa - hunger and undernutrition are holding back the potential for inclusive growth in many regions of the world. Globally, the

World Bank estimates that rising food prices plunged 44 million people into poverty between June 2010 and February 2011.¹ This increase in poverty is associated with higher malnutrition, as poorer people eat less and substitute more expensive, nutritious foods with cheaper staples.² It is not just food, but the right food that matters - children in particular need diverse, nutritious diets to survive and develop. Undernutrition in childhood results from the combined effects of a poor diet (hunger) and infection.³

In addition to the suffering and loss of lives this causes, hunger and malnutrition are resulting in huge productivity losses and holding back the potential for inclusive growth. The World Bank estimates the total cost to national economies to be as high as 2 to 3% of gross domestic product.⁴ The G20, as the world's premier economic forum, must seize the opportunity at their 2011 Summit in Cannes to ensure vulnerable groups escape the grip of hunger, undernutrition and poverty.

With food prices returning to record highs in 2011, it is timely that the French G20 Presidency has put food security back on the G20 agenda. The French Presidency is working with G20 members to help governments, firms

¹ World Bank (2011), Food Price Watch February 2011.

² Ibid.

³ Save the Children (2009), Hungry for Change: An Eight-Step, Costed Plan of Action to Tackle Global Child Hunger.

⁴ World Bank (2006), Repositioning Nutrition as Central to Development.

and farmers to manage food price volatility and enhance agricultural productivity. G20 Agricultural Ministers recognise that securing a nutritious diet for the most vulnerable people is a critical dimension of food security.⁵ The proposed G20 Action Plan on Food Price Volatility and Agriculture to boost and secure agriculture growth can help improve productivity, increase yields, open up markets to farmers and generate reliable income sources for the poor. The G20 is also developing an Agriculture Risk Management Toolbox to offer mechanisms such as insurance which will help farmers to manage the risks of volatile food prices.

The G20's approach, however, is missing some of the key ingredients for food security. The G20's upcoming summit provides an opportunity for members to collectively:

- commit to fulfil existing commitments to address food security and agriculture;
- set out specific actions to ensure that nutrition objectives are integrated into agriculture strategies; and
- emphasise the role of social safety nets in helping vulnerable groups to cope with food price volatility.

With national budgets already under stress, it is critical that the G20 consider the recommendations of the forthcoming report from Bill Gates to the G20 on innovative sources of financing for development. The French Presidency is seeking commitments to a global financial transaction tax (FTT). If the necessary support for an FTT can be won in 2011, the G20 must ensure this is earmarked for development purposes, as intended by the French proposal. In addition to finding new sources of development finance, achieving the aims of food security and inclusive growth requires a robust anti-corruption agenda. Corruption is a significant source of risk to development and the G20's agenda will help to ensure that aid reaches those who need it most and that donors get the full value for their development investments.

Save the Children calls on G20 Leaders to take the following steps at their November Summit in Cannes to deliver the missing ingredients for long term food security:

- 1. Endorse Never Again: A Charter to End Extreme Hunger**
- 2. Urgently and rapidly deliver on outstanding funding commitments to the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI) by 2012**
- 3. Provide additional contributions to the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) established to help deliver the AFSI**
- 4. Endorse the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Framework as a critical mechanism to ensure food security and agriculture are nutrition sensitive**
- 5. Include rapid support to scale up social safety nets, including cash transfers, in the G20 Agriculture Risk Management Toolbox, and ensure that support is targeted to those most in need, including children.**
- 6. Convene a high-level meeting in early 2012 in Mexico to explore social protection approaches the G20 can support to build the long-term resilience of vulnerable groups to crises and support economic development and inclusive growth.**

Preventing another hunger crisis

The crisis currently affecting East Africa means hundreds of thousands face hunger and death. A lethal combination of rising food prices, conflict, drought and food insecurity have placed 600,000 children in the region at risk and, over the 3 months May-July 2011 alone, reportedly 29,000 children under five died in Somalia.⁶

Early warning systems are already in place across East Africa. There were early indications that this crisis was growing but the warnings went largely unheeded – just as in so many previous disasters. Unfortunately, large-scale action to prevent the worst of these crises did not come in time.

Emergency responses are necessary but not sufficient: long-term efforts are required to deliver food security and build resilience to prevent such emergencies in the future. Members of the international community who recognise this have developed a charter outlining the specific actions required for the international community to ensure the crisis in East Africa is the last time we see preventable hunger anywhere on this scale. Actions required include

⁵ G20 Agriculture Ministers (2011), Action Plan on Food Price Volatility and Agriculture.

⁶ US Government estimates: <http://www.usaid.gov/press/speeches/2011/ty110803.html>

early response to early warnings, including by the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), investing in food security and agricultural production, protecting the poorest through social protection, including cash transfers, and scaling up emergency food reserves. "Never Again: A Charter to End Extreme Hunger" will be raised with world leaders at the UN General Assembly in September 2011 and, with just over a month to consider its content, G20 Leaders have an opportunity to offer global leadership at their Summit in November 2011 by endorsing the Never Again Charter and committing to end extreme hunger.

The G20 can play a particular role in delivering some aspects of the Charter, including meeting existing financial commitments to food security initiatives, emphasising the importance of nutrition and the role of social protection in stabilising families' supply of food and cash throughout the year so they can avoid the worst of a crisis. Specific actions the G20 should take on these aspects in 2011 in addition to endorsing the Never Again Charter are outlined in this briefing.

Save the Children calls on the G20 to:

- 1. Endorse Never Again: A Charter to End Extreme Hunger**

Fulfilling existing commitments to food security

Observing the terrible impact of rising food prices on poor people in developing countries in 2007 and 2008, 13 countries including 11 that will be represented at the Cannes Summit, committed US\$22 billion over three years towards the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI).⁷ A key principle of this coordinated global response was to set out a comprehensive twin-track approach to food security – direct action to tackle immediate hunger for the most vulnerable, and medium to long-term sustainable agriculture, food security, nutrition and rural development programmes. Two years on and one year away from the end of this initiative, the majority of funds pledged have yet to be disbursed. ONE reports that only 22% of commitments over the first two years of the initiative have been fully disbursed with a further 26% 'on track to be

⁷ "L'Aquila" Joint Statement on Food Security 2009.

disbursed.⁸ Furthermore, only 2% of the pledges that have been fully disbursed have been channelled towards nutrition.⁹

The G20 demonstrated its collective commitment to food and nutrition security in 2009 by requesting the establishment of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) to help implement the L'Aquila initiative. The GAFSP is a global fund that can quickly provide funding to support national plans to improve food security and reduce risk and vulnerability. The GAFSP is supporting a range of activities to help national governments to increase the productivity of farmers and equip them to overcome hunger and undernutrition. However the GAFSP is underfunded, with only four G20 member countries contributing, and only \$405 million of the \$925 million pledged by donors received. The GAFSP has now exhausted its available resources and is forced to turn away countries requesting assistance.

With global prices of staple foods reaching record highs again in 2011 and millions of children and families still at risk of suffering hunger and malnutrition, it is critical that G20 members fulfil their existing commitments to address food security and ensure the sustainability of the GAFSP to maintain support for vulnerable groups at risk of hunger and malnutrition.

Save the Children calls on the G20 to:

- 2. Urgently and rapidly deliver outstanding funding commitments to the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI) by the end of 2012.**
- 3. Provide additional contributions to the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP).**

Scaling up nutrition

The problems associated with hunger and food insecurity cannot be solved solely by increased agricultural production. The best agricultural development strategies are those which are sensitive to people's nutritional needs. Nutrition-sensitive agriculture interventions which

⁸ Group of 8 (2011), Deauville Accountability Report G8 Commitments on Health and Food Security: State of Delivery and Results.

⁹ ONE (2011), Agriculture Accountability: Holding Donors to their L'Aquila Promises.

promote, for instance, agricultural diversification, the cultivation of local crops with high nutrition values (biofortification), poultry and livestock production, or those that reduce the cost of nutritious foods, can greatly contribute to reducing and preventing undernutrition.

Global leaders are slowly recognising the importance of improving nutrition. The L'Aquila initiative in 2009 emphasised the importance of improving nutrition as part of efforts to tackle food insecurity and earlier this year, the G20 Agriculture Ministers announced that to strengthen global food security, steps must be taken to improve access and availability of safe and nutritious food for the most vulnerable, particularly women and children, in developing countries. However, the funding needed to deliver these ambitions has yet to be fully disbursed and often neglects the underlying causes of undernutrition and the role that social safety nets and women can play in the solution.

A movement of governments, civil society, academia, private companies, UN agencies and multilateral organisations committed to overcoming the neglected crisis of malnutrition has emerged, providing a critical opportunity to overcome the disconnect between agriculture, food security and nutrition objectives. The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement provides a focal point for coordinated global action to improve nutrition and its Road Map outlines political, technical and financial ways in which national governments can be supported to develop and implement comprehensive nutrition plans.

The Framework has been endorsed by over 100 organisations and almost 20 governments have already identified their countries as "early risers," committed to taking comprehensive, multi-sectoral action to overcome malnutrition. As this movement gathers pace it needs the support of major donor governments as well as those with the greatest burden of undernutrition to ensure the SUN Framework is operationalised and coordinated action to reduce undernutrition is taken. Only a few G20 countries, including Canada, France, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the United States, have endorsed the SUN Framework to date. We call on all G20 countries to endorse the SUN Framework.

Working hand-in-hand with nutrition-sensitive agriculture is a continued focus on gender integration in agriculture. There is clear and robust evidence that shows the benefits for children and families when gender considerations are

incorporated into both agriculture and nutrition programs. It is critical that gender roles in agriculture are understood and barriers to full participation overcome in order for agricultural strategies to both maximise productivity and address malnutrition. For example, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimates that if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20 - 30% which could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5 - 4%, which could in turn reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12 - 17%.¹⁰ We call on the G20 countries to continue to invest in programs and policies that recognise the unique role women play as producers of food, as well as providers of food and nutrition for families.

Save the Children calls on the G20 to:
4. Endorse the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) framework

Providing social safety nets during crises

In addition to nutrition interventions and diversified agricultural production, in times of rising and volatile food prices, poor families also need social protection, such as cash and/or food transfers, to allow them to continue to access nutritious diets. With poor people in developing countries spending on average 60 – 80% of their income on food,¹¹ as prices rise they have no choice but to sell assets, take their children out of school and in many cases put them to work, and buy cheaper, less nutritious food.

Supporting families through emergency social safety nets during a crisis can help them to avoid these extreme coping strategies which drive them deeper into poverty. Even better, long term national social protection schemes can prepare families in advance of a crisis, helping them to manage their income and protect them from shocks, such as rising food prices, as they occur. In "*Lasting Benefits: The role of cash transfers in tackling child mortality*" Save the Children outlines some of the positive impacts of one aspect of social safety nets – cash transfers – on reducing

¹⁰ FAO (2011), The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-2011. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/en/>

¹¹ Nugent, R.(2000), The impact of urban agriculture on the household and local economies, in N, Bakker, M. Dubbeling, S. Grundel, U. Sabel-Koscella and H. de Zeeuw (eds.) *Growing Cities, Growing Food*, DSA, Eurasburg. Available at <http://www.trabajopopular.org.ar/material/Theme3.pdf>

poverty and inequality and improving child nutrition. *Lasting Benefits* notes that seven out of ten cash transfer programmes that report on stunting (child physical underdevelopment) show positive and sizeable impacts.

To deliver these benefits to all vulnerable groups, more developing country governments need to deliver social safety nets and donors need to assist with financial and technical support. As already agreed in the 2009 L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security, delivering food, cash and vouchers through effective emergency assistance as well as through national safety nets and nutrition schemes is an imperative goal. The vast majority of G20 members endorsed this statement and should now honour this commitment by ensuring that safety nets are acknowledged as a critical risk management tool.

The G20 Action Plan on Food Price Volatility and Agriculture proposes an Agriculture Risk Management Toolbox. This toolbox is currently being developed and includes welcome practical measures such as new insurance instruments for vulnerable countries, firms and farmers to manage food price volatility risk. G20 Agriculture Ministers invited multilateral, regional and national development banks to further explore counter-cyclical instruments, potentially with rapid availability of financing, as part of the toolbox and we urge the G20 to agree that this support includes financing to scale up national safety nets during crises and shocks, and assistance for the development of national schemes where they are not already in place.

Importantly, safety nets must be targeted to those most in need. The Toolbox should be consistent with the call at the joint G20-FAO emergency meeting on the Horn of Africa in July 2011 that assistance to governments to establish safety nets protects the most vulnerable – pregnant and lactating mothers, children in their first 1,000 days of life and the old, chronically ill and disabled.

Save the Children calls on the G20 to:
5. Include rapid support to scale up social safety nets, including cash transfers, in the G20 Agriculture Risk Management Toolbox.

Supporting long-term social protection for inclusive economic growth

As noted at L'Aquila in 2009 and endorsed by a majority of G20 members, in the long-term, government led, cash-based social protection systems and targeted nutrition interventions are needed to support the poorest and most marginalised populations. Social protection, including cash transfers, can build the longer term resilience of the poor to future shocks and crises. Schemes designed to boost employment and productivity, such as public works programs and assistance targeted to the working age population, can contribute to livelihoods and economic growth. But broader cash transfer schemes can also provide a longer-term boost to these avenues to economic growth - in South Africa, labour force participation was 13 – 17% higher in households with a pension, compared with similar households not receiving benefits¹² and in Mexico the evaluation of the PROGRESA cash transfer scheme estimated that participating children will see 8% higher earnings in adulthood due to additional years of schooling.¹³

These experiences highlight the importance of extending social protection and assistance to vulnerable groups who cannot or should not be working - children, older people, and people with disabilities. This can include support through education and health systems and targeted long-term cash transfers and is necessary to achieving the long-term development potential of social protection. It can play a critical role in reducing child mortality, particularly through improving child and maternal nutrition and increasing access to basic health services. Consequently, social protection programmes should directly benefit vulnerable mothers and children and aim to reach children early to avoid the potentially irreversible consequences of undernutrition during the critical window before the age of two years.

Within the G20 there is a wealth of experience with social protection schemes that have helped to overcome poverty and inequality. These examples, particularly those in middle income countries such as Mexico and Brazil, can

¹² Economic Policy Research Institute (2004), *Final Report: The social and economic impact of South Africa's social security system*, EPRI Research Paper 37, Cape Town, EPRI, South Africa Department of Social Development.

¹³ Skoufias, E (2001), *PROGRESA and its Impacts on Human Capital and Welfare of Households in Rural Mexico: A synthesis of the results of an evaluation* by IFPRI, Washington, IFPRI.

offer useful lessons and provide guidance for other emerging economies and low-income countries in designing their own approaches. There are also a range of existing institutional and cross-institutional policy frameworks, such as the Social Protection Floor initiative, which can inform the development of social protection schemes at a national level.

A high-level G20 event, convening senior political figures who have steered these programs through implementation would provide a valuable forum for policy dialogue and exchange of experiences – ideally including representatives from non-G20 low-income countries. The event would consider these experiences and existing policy frameworks to make policy recommendations to the G20 about the design and delivery of social protection, including how best donors can support social protection through their development agencies. These recommendations would guide the G20 toward an agreement at their 2012 Summit on a social protection action plan, outlining how they would support governments to deliver social protection schemes that advance the G20's agenda for inclusive growth and support and protect children and vulnerable families from poverty, inequality and future crises.

With food security at the heart of their agenda in 2011, the G20 has an opportunity to help avoid an emergency like the hunger crisis in East Africa in the future and address the neglected crisis of undernutrition. It must lend support to global movements to prevent another hunger crisis and to address nutrition, including by bridging the gap between agriculture, food security and nutrition interventions. It must also work toward supporting countries to develop social protection schemes that help protect the poor from future crises. Save the Children urges the G20 to take the specific steps outlined in this briefing to deliver both food and nutrition security to help save the lives of millions of children and ensure they grow up to contribute to stronger, more inclusive global economic growth.

Save the Children calls on the G20 to:

- 6. Convene a high-level meeting in early 2012 in Mexico to explore social protection approaches the G20 can support**