



# Informing a Global Agenda for Food Security

IFPRI's active engagement with global policymakers and experts brings international attention to new and emerging issues critical to food security, poverty reduction, and nutrition.

Since the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) was founded in 1975, it has grown from a small research organization to a global thought leader. The Institute's work helps shape how national governments, international organizations, donors, nongovernmental organizations, private-sector entities, and researchers address the challenges of creating broad-based development and food security for all. IFPRI has achieved international credibility by focusing on vanguard issues and grounding its analysis and policy recommendations in rigorous research and empirical evidence. Innovative communications, partnerships, and dialogue have strengthened IFPRI's contribution to informing views and practices of donors, governments, and researchers alike on key food policy issues. IFPRI actively promotes discussion with global and national policymakers by convening conferences, participating in global and regional forums, and providing evidence and analysis for effective food policy.

## Influencing Global Decisionmakers

IFPRI's engagement with policymakers and experts has consistently drawn attention to emerging issues important to food security, poverty reduction, and nutrition. By convening decisionmakers and experts to discuss critical new issues—which over the last 40 years have included agricultural development for

poverty reduction, nutrition, and resilience—IFPRI has contributed to global priority-setting, research initiatives, and policy reforms. Conferences and workshops at the country, regional, and global levels, which convene participants from a broad and diverse range of countries and sectors, have played a central role in disseminating IFPRI's research, promoting exchanges of ideas and knowledge, and increasing attention to food policy.

The 2020 Vision Initiative for Food, Agriculture, and the Environment has been one of IFPRI's most influential forward-looking initiatives and has played a key role in spearheading discussions of food security questions. In the early 1990s, agricultural and rural development issues were receiving little attention—and reduced funding—from the development community. The 2020 Initiative leveraged IFPRI's strong research to bring attention back to these crucial issues and stimulated debate on critical new questions about agriculture, nutrition, poverty, and the environment. The World Food Prize was awarded to IFPRI's director general in 2001 for this groundbreaking initiative.

In its first phase, the initiative focused on the challenge of ending food insecurity by 2020. The first 2020 Vision conference, held in Washington, DC, in 1995 presented a central policy message: reducing food insecurity and poverty requires policies that improve the performance of developing country agriculture sector. An innovative global model—the International Model for Policy Analysis of Agricultural Commodities and Trade (IMPACT)—was developed to predict the consequences of various possible policy scenarios. According to an external assessment, renewed attention to agriculture was evident in the increase in spending by some international donors in the late 1990s.

A series of global conferences have continued to draw attention to emerging issues that have significant potential to affect food security and poverty. The 2001 conference in Bonn, Germany, focused on sustainable food security for all in the context of globalization, trade liberalization, technological advances, and environmental degradation. The 2004 conference, “Assuring Food and Nutrition Security in Africa by 2020,” held in Kampala, Uganda, heralded a growing commitment to food and nutrition security in Africa. This focus dovetailed with the work by African countries on the Comprehensive

Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), an African framework for promoting regional investment in rural development.

The year 2007 marked the halfway point for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, an important moment for evaluating global progress in reducing poverty. The 2020 Vision conference, held in Beijing that year, highlighted the plight of the ultra poor. Reflecting seminal work by IFPRI researchers, “Taking Action for the World's Poorest and Hungry People” offered a valuable opportunity to identify who is being left behind and how to effectively help them. The conference coincided with a National Congress of the Communist Party of China—likewise focused on the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in the country—where officials announced plans to strengthen poverty reduction strategies.

With growing concern on nutrition, the conference held in 2011 focused on “Leveraging Agriculture for Improving Nutrition and Health.” This conference helped change professional discourse about how agriculture can contribute to improving nutrition and health. It also generated responses from several organizations seeking to integrate nutrition with agriculture, but uncertain of how to proceed. The conference contributed to growing international interest in the issue, bolstering support, for example, for the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health.

Most recently, the 2020 Conference held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 2014 focused on resilience in food and nutrition security, an issue of growing concern as many people and parts of the world are hit by major economic, climatic, social, and political shocks. This conference brought together experts and practitioners to learn from each other how to build resilient agricultural and food systems, social systems, and governance structures that can preempt and better manage different types of shocks.

## Providing Knowledge in International Debates

As food security and poverty reduction have become critical issues for the global community, IFPRI has participated in key international debates and forums that have

established global priorities. With a presence at major global gatherings, such as the annual World Economic Forums, the Group of 20 (G20) summits, the 1992 Earth Summit and United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), World Food Summits in 1996, 2002, and 2009, and many more specialized conferences, IFPRI is able to draw on its policy knowledge and expertise to contribute to the development of global goals and plans.

The Copenhagen Consensus, an initiative that asked leading scholars including Nobel laureates in economics to recommend priorities for global development investments, has drawn global awareness to the importance of investing in food security and nutrition. Through several iterations of the consensus, experts were invited to contribute analysis on the rationale for investments in various fields ranging from trade policy and private-sector development to health and education policies. For the first effort in 2004, IFPRI researchers in collaboration with other experts provided a synthesis of relevant research on hunger and malnutrition that pointed to the economic rationale for reducing hunger. This work focused on the potential gains in productivity and reductions in economic costs that can be achieved by addressing child nutrition, malnutrition, and agricultural development needs. A 2008 update reviewed new evidence corroborating the initial work. For the third iteration of the Copenhagen Consensus, researchers at IFPRI focused on the costs and benefits of a bundle of nutritional interventions: their work showed that a dollar spent on reducing chronic undernutrition can have a long-term payoff of thirty dollars through improvements in health, cognition, and reduced economic costs. With the various studies over the three rounds, the Copenhagen Consensus recognized investments in nutrition as among the most cost-effective opportunities for improving lives.

Meetings of the G20 shape global economic priorities and policies. IFPRI's work on price volatility and its

## Flagship Publications

IFPRI's three flagship reports have increased global awareness of food security and nutrition problems.

**Global Food Policy Report.** This annual report provides an in-depth look at major food policy developments and events that have affected progress in food and nutrition security, highlighting key challenges and opportunities, new evidence and knowledge, and emerging issues, as well as updating key food policy indicators. [www.ifpri.org/topic/global-food-policy-report](http://www.ifpri.org/topic/global-food-policy-report)

**Global Hunger Index.** Published annually for the last 10 years by IFPRI, Welthungerhilfe, and Concern Worldwide, this report combines health and nutrition indicators to create a single indicator of hunger that allows comparisons across countries and over time. [www.ifpri.org/publication/2015-global-hunger-index-armed-conflict-and-challenge-hunger](http://www.ifpri.org/publication/2015-global-hunger-index-armed-conflict-and-challenge-hunger)

**Global Nutrition Report.** This report, first published by IFPRI in 2014, brings together data on obesity, child stunting, and other nutrition-related indicators for all of the world's countries for the first time and uses this evidence to promote action and accountability worldwide. <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/global-nutrition-report-2014-actions-and-accountability-accelerate-worlds-progress>

transmission from international to local markets informed activities of the G20 in France (2011), Mexico (2012), and Australia (2014), where IFPRI researchers were coauthors of the recommendations to the G20 from international organizations. At the 2011 summit held in the wake of a global food crisis, world leaders endorsed an action plan for increased productivity and transparency in commodity markets to curb price volatility and stressed the need to improve the productivity and food security of smallholders. The following year in Mexico the G20 reaffirmed its commitment to the plan and welcomed progress on implementation, such as the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement and efforts to increase access to market information. At the 2014 summit, IFPRI contributed to the text of the G20 Food Security and Nutrition Framework and to the design of a food security strategy. In response to a request from the 2015 Istanbul summit, IFPRI together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations will lead the establishment of a platform on postharvest losses as part of the new framework.

## Responding Rapidly to Food Security Crises

Food security can be jeopardized by rapid changes in global food systems. IFPRI is well positioned to respond to these crises and evolving conditions because of its long-term investments in data, knowledge, and analytic tools. This was the case in 2007 and 2008, when rising food demand, increasing energy prices, extreme weather, and misguided policy actions combined to drive up world food prices precipitously. Food policy suddenly became of enormous interest worldwide, and IFPRI was positioned as a thought leader in this area.

As food prices spiked, IFPRI's key policy messages revolved around trade barriers, biofuel policies, assistance to small farmers, social protection, and increased investment in agricultural research and development. IFPRI pulled together in a remarkable institutional effort to respond to the high level of media and public policy attention. The Institute contributed to policy discussions through publications, web presence, media engagement, and face-to-face presentations for heads of governments and parliaments, including congressional testimonies. International institutional arrangements were improved to some degree to avoid future crises: the Agricultural Market Information System was established to monitor markets; commodity market deregulations were reversed in the United States and Europe; and some regional food security measures were established.

Since then, IFPRI has been actively involved in global efforts to create mechanisms for better managing world

food supplies and preventing such food price emergencies, including better tracking of price signals and management of food stocks. The Food Security Portal, an open access information platform facilitated by IFPRI, provides country profiles, analytical tools, and price analysis, and highlights food security hotspots to support policymaking.

IFPRI will continue its forward-looking approach, taking on new and salient issues for food security and hunger and developing the evidence needed for effective policy design. Long-term investment in communications, dialogue, and convening stakeholders will bring the results of IFPRI's valuable research to policymakers and help ensure that the global agenda for food security addresses hunger and poverty.

## Resources

Behrman, J., H. Alderman, and J. Hoddinott. 2004. *The Challenge of Hunger and Malnutrition*. Copenhagen Consensus Challenge Paper. Copenhagen, Denmark: Copenhagen Consensus.

Hoddinott, J., M. Rosegrant, and M. Torero. 2012. *Hunger and Malnutrition*. Copenhagen Consensus Challenge Paper. Copenhagen, Denmark: Copenhagen Consensus.

IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute). 2015. IFPRI 2020 Vision. [www.ifpri.org/program/2020-vision](http://www.ifpri.org/program/2020-vision)

IFPRI. 2015. Food Security. <https://www.ifpri.org/topic/food-security>

von Braun, J., A. U. Ahmed, K. Asenso-Okyere, S. Fan, A. Gulati, J. Hoddinott, R. Pandya-Lorch, M. W. Rosegrant, M. T. Ruel, M. Torero, T. van Rhee, and K. von Grebmer. 2008. *High Food Prices: The What, Who, and How of Proposed Policies*. Policy Brief. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute.

This publication has not been subjected to the International Food Policy Research Institute's (IFPRI) standard peer review process. Any opinions stated herein are not necessarily representative of or endorsed by IFPRI. To find all 13 "Making a Difference" stories, please go to <http://www.ifpri.org/40>.



INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

A world free of hunger and malnutrition

2033 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006-1002 USA

T. +1-202-862-5600 | F. +1-202-467-4439 | Email: [ifpri@cgiar.org](mailto:ifpri@cgiar.org) | Web: [www.ifpri.org](http://www.ifpri.org)

Copyright © 2015 International Food Policy Research Institute. All rights reserved. Contact [ifpri-copyright@cgiar.org](mailto:ifpri-copyright@cgiar.org) for permission to republish. Photo: © ILRI.