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Research Report

Food and nutrition security: Towards the full realisation of human rights

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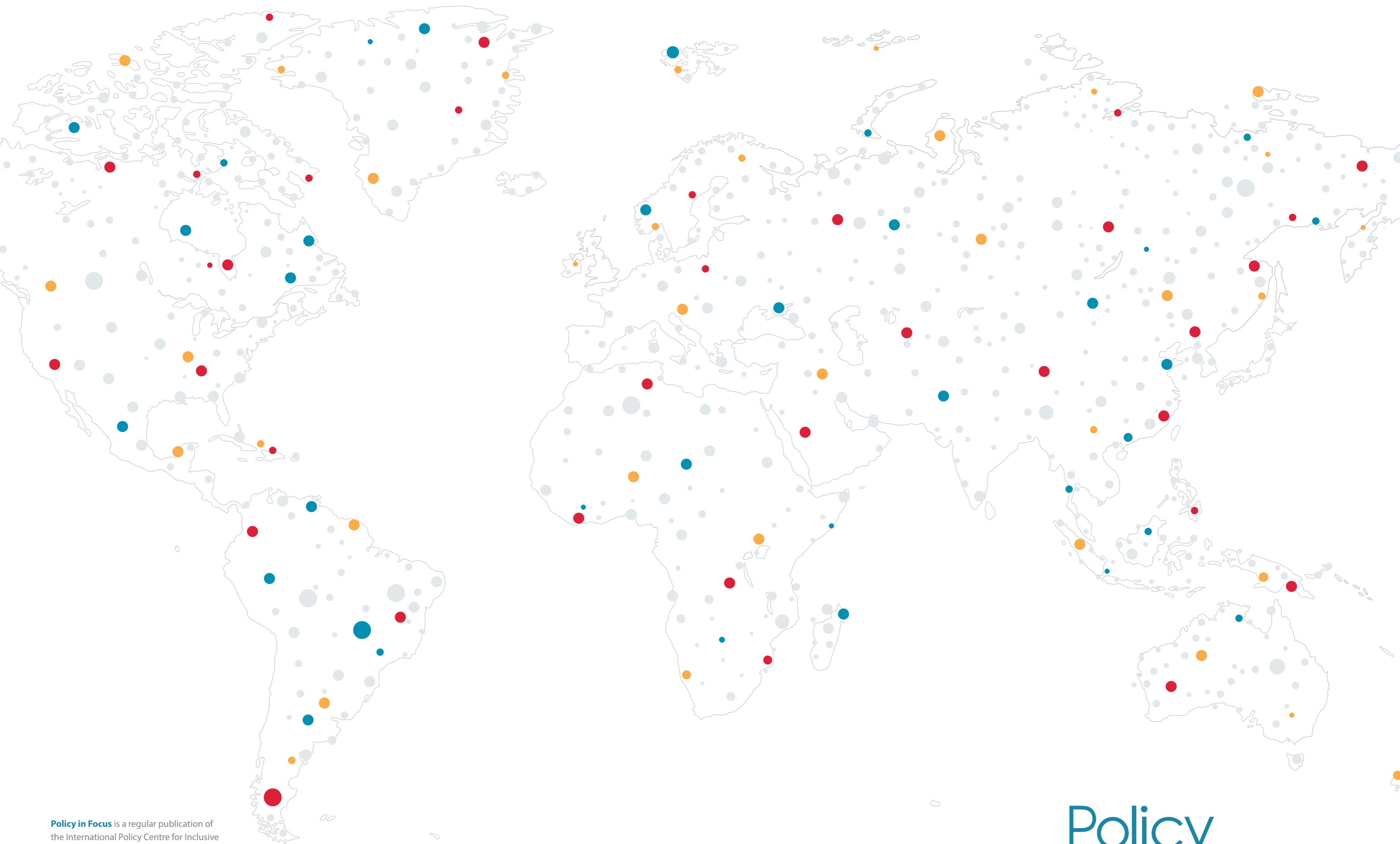
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Food and nutrition security:
towards the full realisation
of human rights



Empowered lives.
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Policy in Focus

Summary



The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) is a partnership between the United Nations and the Government of Brazil to promote South–South learning on social policies. The Centre specialises in research-based policy recommendations to foster the reduction of poverty and inequality as well as promote inclusive growth. The IPC-IG is linked to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Brazil, the Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management of Brazil (MPOG) and the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea) of the Government of Brazil.

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The human right to adequate food and nutrition within a framework of food sovereignty: towards social inclusion and the reduction of inequalities

by Flavio Luiz Schieck Valente
and Denisse Córdova Montes¹

Food and nutrition have been historically shown to be at the core of individual and collective human development. The inability of a society to adequately generate an enabling environment that allows most of its members to feed themselves, and guarantees access to food to those unable to do so on their own, has led to the downfall of mighty rulers and even of great empires. This was certainly taken into account in the elaboration of the French Constitution after the French Revolution and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights after the end of the Second World War, which has resulted in the institution of the human right to adequate food, among others.

The tension between rights of traders and investors and the human right to adequate food and nutrition for all

Since the end of the Second World War, there has been a growing dispute between two competing visions in the field of food and nutritional security (FNS). The first, representing the industrialised and commodity-exporting countries, defends that all food insecurity and malnutrition may be fully addressed by a liberalised international food trade system. However, to do so, investors demand to be guaranteed a secure and enabling environment, as clearly spelled out in the strategy and country frameworks of the G7 New Alliance on Food and Nutrition Security for Africa (FIAN International 2014).² The second places more emphasis on all human beings having stable access to a greater diversity of foods to be obtained either directly from production and/or through income, mainly coming from local markets, with direct links to small-scale food producers, within an enabling international and national environment, regulated by public interest, in line with the principles and framework

of food sovereignty and reflected in the national and international regulatory bodies of public agencies and governments.³

The interest of governments in the human right to adequate food and nutrition for all (HRtAFN) as a tool to protect national agriculture and FNS arose with the finalisation of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT),⁴ which severely restricted the right of governments, in particular those most affected by hunger and malnutrition, to protect and promote national agriculture through the use of subsidies, regulation of food imports and exports, based on national food security arguments, while leaving basically untouched the huge subsidies provided by the USA and the European Union (EU). The two World Food Summits (Rome, 1996 and 2002), General Comment 12 of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1999) and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food (FAO 2005) also express such an interest.

A convergence of multiple crises

2007 and 2008 marked the convergence of multiple interrelated crises, among them a food crisis which was characterised by food price volatility, great speculation in commodity futures, blockages of food exports and the acute intensification of land-grabbing practices. This led to a loss of governmental confidence in the capability of free trade to guarantee access to food at adequate prices in the international market. This lack of confidence mounted in the face of food riots in more than 30 countries, some of which were important contributing factors to the toppling of governments and/or even civil wars. The first report of the High Level Task Force for Agriculture and Food Security (2008) clearly diagnosed that the food crisis, in the context of other converging crises, decreased even further the legitimacy of the governance of globalisation and increased

political instability in the countries most affected by FNS. In Africa we can highlight the cases of Egypt, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Mozambique and Tunisia, among others (Hossain et al. 2014; Bryceson et al. 2009; Berezneva and Lee 2011).

The responses to such crises were multiple and contradictory (Mittal 2009). Limiting the scope of our analysis to the field of FNS, we can identify a few of those relevant to Africa and Brazil. Three major new initiatives taking place between 2008 and 2009 must be highlighted: the creation of the United Nations (UN) High Level Task Force on Global Food and Nutrition Security, the establishment of the G8 Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security and the reform of the Committee on World Food Security.

In line with the High Level Task Force and the Global Partnership, the Global Redesign Initiative (GRI)—launched by the World Economic Forum (2010)—intensified the promotion of the participation of transnational corporations (TNCs) and other private-sector entities as well as philanthropic ventures in multi-stakeholder governance mechanisms, which in many instances bypass intergovernmental bodies (Gleckman 2013). At least two initiatives aimed at Africa were launched under the umbrella of the GRI: Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) and the G8 New Alliance on Food Security and Nutrition for Africa. These international initiatives joined the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, and together with the intensification of bilateral, plurilateral and international trade and investment agreements, clearly favour the security of investors and their profits, to the detriment of the well-being of populations in general (Valente 2015).

A human rights analysis of the New Alliance country profiles shows that,

The challenges involved in the realisation of the human right to adequate food and nutrition (HRtAFN), and of food and nutrition sovereignty and security in African countries and in Brazil, comprise different elements—but also share several similarities. While there has been evidence of a significant reduction in hunger and malnutrition worldwide, it is observed that this phenomenon has not occurred at the same pace in sub-Saharan Africa and in some regions of Brazil. At the same time, there has been a rapid increase in the rates of overweight, obesity and related illnesses, such as diabetes, cardiac disease, various types of cancer, etc.

The editors of this special thematic issue of *Policy in Focus* have sought to present readers with a selection of contributing authors and articles that share a holistic interpretation of the HRtAFN. This interpretation reaffirms that its true realisation goes far beyond the mere fulfilment of basic food and nutritional needs but, rather, must incorporate multiple dimensions, such as: i) the self-determination and sovereignty of peoples—which includes access to, control of and participation in decisions about natural resources in their territories; ii) social participation in the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of policies oriented towards food and nutrition security, including decisions about what to produce, as well as how and for whom; iii) the guarantee of physical and economic access to a diverse, healthy and nutritionally balanced diet, free from contamination, which is culturally adequate and locally and regionally produced by smallholder farmers, according to agroecological principles; and iv) the guarantee that every human being may reach their full potential, following the attainment of nutritional well-being, such as a well-functioning immune system, the potential to grow and develop

fully, the potential to learn and access the accumulated, collective human knowledge, the potential to reach emotional maturity and to reaffirm their social and cultural identities.

Contributing authors featured in this issue present critical analyses of some of the most relevant public policy strategies aiming to overcome challenges to the HRtAFN, while also identifying political and economic processes that tend to reinforce and even create new obstacles. To this end, readers will find articles ranging from HRtAFN reference benchmarks, to the importance of the gender dimension for the attainment of this right, to studies on specific public policies being implemented in Brazil and several African countries. Voices from academia and international and civil society organisations are all represented in this special edition.

Readers will also be presented with an analysis of international cooperation, especially conducted between Brazil and some African countries over the past few years. Through comparative analysis, authors highlight perceptions of international cooperation initiatives in food and nutrition security from the viewpoint of the countries involved.

We hope that this publication, which comprises such a wide gamut of perspectives, can significantly contribute to the ever-growing debate on food and nutrition security, and represent another step towards universal attainment of the HRtAFN.

by Flavio Luiz Schieck Valente, Lívia Maria da Costa Nogueira and Veruska Prado Alexandre

despite lip service paid to reducing hunger and malnutrition, the work plans concentrate on dismantling national customary or legislated law on land tenure, seeds and water, which might interfere with the wish of investors and TNCs to purchase large extensions of former commons for agriculture or extractive purposes (including water), control the seed market and forbid traditional practices of seed exchange. The process is well advanced in several countries and will certainly result in massive displacement of rural populations, increasing the migratory pressure towards unprepared urban centres or Europe (FIAN International 2012).

A case study of the impact on Mexico of the privatisation of justice under the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) system instituted by the more than 3000 bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements, of which the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was one of the first to be implemented, shows that the Mexican State has progressively been made unable to protect the human and environmental rights of its own population against damages caused by TNCs and other businesses. The confidential, private arbitration mechanisms examine decisions taken by privately hired arbitration chambers, which charge millions of dollars to analyse the complaints lodged by TNCs against the State, usually for having allegedly caused a loss or significant reduction in profits, due to legislation or court or policy decisions. Legal decisions taken in court, demanding reparation from the TNCs to communities or reparation fines to compensate communities and individuals negatively affected by TNCs activities, such as oil spills, contamination of water, soil and food with agrochemicals, illegal forceful displacement and eviction, violence and intimidation, have been overturned by ISDS arbitration chambers, with no right of appeal (Eberhardt 2016). Presently, Mexico is responding to 23 arbitration cases and has already paid almost USD250 million in compensation to at least nine TNCs. Most of the cases came from the USA, but recently the number of complaints from EU-based TNCs has increased, one of them for USD1 billion. According to a recent report, EU-based investors have initiated 53 per cent of all known ISDS cases. And for Mexico this

trend seems to be getting worse, since EU investments in the country have tripled since 2000 (Olivet and Pérez-Rocha 2016).

Conversely, the reform of the Committee on World Food Security, with the support of small-scale producers, social movements and civil society organisations, has managed to re-energise the public policy space for FNS and has led to the discussion of important intergovernmental processes within the framework of the HRtAFN, towards the public regulation of private corporate-sector activities, for example. Simultaneously, in June 2014, the UN Human Rights Council, following requests from South Africa and Ecuador, adopted a resolution to institute an open-ended intergovernmental working group on TNCs and other business enterprises with respect to human rights,⁵ to discuss the elaboration of a human rights treaty to regulate the activities of TNCs.

Humanity is at a crossroads. Globalisation led by market liberalisation has accelerated the production of wealth, but it has also led to an increase in inequalities. The neoliberal Washington of consensus has contributed to a reduction of Member States' public financial contributions to the UN, and the prominent role of neoliberal approaches to public funding has created a vulnerable UN, desperate for resources and open to corporate capture (GPF 2016). At the national state level, people are increasingly questioning the legitimacy of their nationally elected officials as well as their intergovernmental mechanisms, in a context often lacking transparency and growing claims of corruption and conflicts of interest.

At the centre of the crisis of legitimacy faced by public institutions is the fact that individuals, groups, communities and even peoples do not consider these institutions to be working for the public interest and for the protection and promotion of human rights. On the contrary, democratic mechanisms such as elections, executive, legislative and even judicial authorities are increasingly controlled by or biased in favour of mega corporate interests and other businesses. This leads to almost total impunity for corporate crimes which affect millions of people throughout the world.

The primacy of human rights law over all other legal frameworks, enshrined in the

UN Charter and the UN Bill of Rights, has been sidelined by the economic power of corporate and financial interests, and the instruments to judge disputes between the interests of private investors and those of society as a whole, in particular of those most affected by exclusion, discrimination, poverty, violence and exploitation, are totally private in nature, off limits for public scrutiny and counting on the political collusion of the select group of highly industrialised countries.

At such a time, it is wise to return to the roots of the democratic principle of popular sovereignty, to consult the voice of the people, and in particular those most affected by the conjoining of these factors. Popular sovereignty is at the root of democracy and of human rights, and must be revisited for the sake of democracy. It is within this perspective that we propose a reinterpretation of the right to adequate food (Valente, Suárez-Franco, and Córdova Montes 2016).

What is the human right to food?

The human rights framework is a social construct arising from the struggles of individuals, social groups and peoples against oppression, exploitation, discrimination and abuses of power by governments and other powerful economic, political and religious actors.

The interpretation of the right to food has evolved significantly since its inclusion in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The current conceptualisation of the right to food within the framework of national food security alone, even in its most updated version, limits the understanding of this right to the dimensions of the access and stability of access to and the availability of food, and the recognition of nutrition is limited to that of a potential outcome. In doing so, it does not tackle the root causes of food and nutrition insecurity, most of which—whether national or international in nature—are seen as being external to the mandate of intergovernmental policy spaces and organisations dealing with FNS. Examples of these are: the areas of trade and trade agreements, finance for development, women's human rights, in particular sexual and reproductive rights, predatory extractivist initiatives and the issue of addressing inequalities.



Photo: Neil Palmer/CIAT. A farmer at work, Kenya, 2010 <<http://goo.gl/SWk9zt>>.

There is a need to question the current conceptual frontiers, drawing on the struggles of social movements such as those for food sovereignty, women's rights, and nutrition, to incorporate the vision and demands of these movements. These struggles bring public attention to areas that the social, economic and political system does not deal adequately with or can even play a part in causing. At the same time, the lessons learned from the ongoing implementation of FNS policies within the HRtAFN framework must be reflected in the updated interpretation of the right itself. In this article we will provide some reflection regarding the use of the HRtAFN approach as an integrative framework for initiatives geared towards ensuring FNS.

What is the human right to adequate food and nutrition?

The interpretation of the right to food—or, rather, the HRtAFN—must fully incorporate the nutritional dimension and be re-conceptualised within the framework of peoples' sovereignty and women's rights to be able to expose and address the main patterns of violations of this right.

Food is not a mere commodity or a 'medicine'; it is the expression of a social process of eating and nourishment, within which nutritional well-being is not only the ultimate goal but also a prerequisite—a primary, necessary condition (capability)⁶ for human beings to be born, be healthy, grow, develop, learn, work, make love, give birth, breastfeed properly and be happy and socially active within their communities.

Furthermore, the full realisation of women's human rights is indispensable to the realisation of the HRtAFN for all. Much of hunger and malnutrition is due to women being treated as second-class citizens in most parts of the world, with limited control over their lives and sexual and reproductive rights; limited access to land, productive resources, education, jobs and equal pay; being subjected to violence at home and by society in general; and having limited guarantee of the right to breastfeed.⁷

Corporate capture of human rights

Industrialised and emerging economies alike promote a market-oriented neoliberal paradigm, closely linked to the interests of TNCs and other powerful enterprises, which asserts that hunger and malnutrition can be addressed through increased food production and the liberalisation of international trade. It also attempts to reduce the HRtAFN to the 'right to calories', particularly in the form of food assistance/aid or handouts, which often do not represent the way food is produced, by and for whom and the social and cultural dimensions of food (Valente, Suarez-Franco, and Córdova Montes 2016).

At the same time, these actors (TNCs, and States by way of an ever-increasing pursuit of trade liberalisation) also promote access to food supplements and food fortification as ways to deliver 'nutrition', often disregarding access to productive resources and local markets by small-scale food producers (family farmers, fisherfolk, pastoralists, among others), as well as the

“ Popular sovereignty is at the root of democracy and of human rights, and must be revisited for the sake of democracy.”

promotion of locally produced, diversified and healthy diets (ibid.).

The systematic reduction of women to their role as mothers and main providers of FNS—as opposed to being recognised as human beings of equal standing with men, who enjoy the full range of human rights—in many public policy documents contributes to rendering women and their rights invisible. Most women in the world, in particular those most affected by poverty, hunger and malnutrition, face different levels of structural violence: discrimination from birth, femicide, genital mutilation, less access to public programmes and policies, less access to education, less autonomy, child marriage, sexual violence, unwanted adolescent pregnancy, fewer inheritance rights, when at all, lower pay for equal jobs, less participation in decisions at home and in society, and discrimination as a woman and mother.

The issue is not about empowering them as mothers, but recognising and guaranteeing their rights as a human being and a woman, so that they can take control of their own lives (ibid.). When women's demands are not adequately taken into account, policies and programmes tend to overburden them with even more responsibilities, increasing the gender imbalance.

Food sovereignty

The food sovereignty framework brings the dimension of power to the fore, identifying who should control natural and productive resources and their uses; who should

define food and nutrition and related policies; and who should regulate powerful economic and political actors, including those at the international level, particularly TNCs (La Via Campesina 2007). At the same time, this framework highlights the need for the elimination of oppression and inequality at the individual and collective level, recognising that the full realisation of women's rights is central to the realisation of food and popular sovereignty.

Final comments and conclusions

The recent literature has brought out several arguments against the continued implementation of the G7 New Alliance on Food and Nutrition Security for Africa, including a resolution approved by the European Parliament on 7 June 2016 (European Parliament 2016), which concurs with most of the criticisms and demands made by civil society organisations.

We believe that proposals based on the principles of human rights could provide guidance for those interested in promoting development centred on people. In Africa, a new movement, initiated at the African Social Forum in Dakar in 2014, decided to take this path. The West African Convergence of Struggles for Land, Water and Seeds analysed the root causes of land, water and seed grabbing in West Africa, and came up with a strong and unified movement that put forth a series of demands to their national governments as well as to regional authorities, representing a set of policies and practices that promote the human

right to land and water, within the framework of food sovereignty.

Social movements have resisted global hegemonic forces and continue to do so, advocating for an alternative paradigm that considers the act of people feeding themselves, their families and their communities a social process of transforming nature and food into human well-being. The human rights framework clearly provides a set of tools for social movements and communities to hold governments accountable to their human rights obligations; these need to be translated into a coherent set of public policies and programmes. However, this can only happen through continued efforts by the people and popular movements and organisations. ●

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Photo: Claudia Berker/Terre des Hommes/FIAN. Women discussing the impact of evictions on family nutrition, Burkina Faso, 2014.

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1. FIAN International.
2. A human rights analysis of the New Alliance country frameworks and strategy highlights that, despite the lip service paid to the reduction of food insecurity and hunger in Africa, no indicators are proposed to measure this 'expected' outcome.

“When women's demands are not adequately taken into account, policies and programmes tend to overburden them with even more responsibilities, increasing the gender imbalance.”

On the other hand, there are plenty of indicators to measure the level of protection offered to the investors and investments as such. To make things worse, many of these guarantees, such as the demanded changes in land, water and seed laws, will significantly reduce access, control and tenure security over these crucial natural resources for the vast majority of the African population, favouring land and water grabbing and dependence on industrialised genetically modified seeds—key ingredients for dispossession, rural-urban exodus and migration.

3. For a detailed description of the national and international enabling environment proposed within the framework for food sovereignty we recommend two readings: the Nyeleni Declaration (La Via Campesina 2007) and a critical analysis of the determinants of the 2008 food crisis (Holt-Giménez 2008).
4. From 1986 to 1994, 123 countries were involved in the eighth round of multilateral trade negotiations within the GATT framework.
5. The Resolution can be found at: <<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/082/52/PDF/G1408252.pdf?OpenElement>>.
6. Capability is a concept proposed by Amartya Sen, as another component of human rights in addition to freedoms (freedom to access land and resources to produce food, freedom from hunger, freedom from contamination of food and water, freedom to choose when to marry etc.) and entitlements (entitlement to security of tenure of the land on which you produce, entitlement to unemployment insurance, to social security, to public health and health services etc.). Capability, in the case of the HRTAFN, means that the realisation of this right implies the achievement of a state of nutritional well-being, which enables the right holder to enjoy other rights fully, such as the right to education, to health, to participation, among others. This capability is linked to the realisation of the HRTAFN.
7. The promotion of the realisation of the right to breastfeed includes following the provisions of the International Code on Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, enacting laws in line with International Labour Organization (ILO) resolutions which guarantee women's rights to adequate paid maternity leave, time and adequate place to breastfeed during working hours, and the right to breastfeed in public spaces.



Photo: Bart Verweij/World Bank. Women from local communities cleaning fresh greens from their garden for a food programme for primary school students, Oudomxay province, Laos, 2012 <<http://goo.gl/8ZqYHV>>.

“Social movements have resisted global hegemonic forces and continue to do so, advocating for an alternative paradigm that considers the act of people feeding themselves, their families and their communities a social process of transforming nature and food into human well-being.”

Linking vulnerable smallholder farmers to school feeding programmes: the experience of PAA Africa

by Mario Gyoeri, Ana Carla Miranda and Fábio Veras Soares¹

The Purchase from Africans for Africa (PAA Africa) programme is an innovative development cooperation initiative that seeks to combine support to agricultural production with institutional food procurement. The programme is being piloted in five African countries—Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger and Senegal—jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and partner national governments. In particular, the programme matches the food demand of schools and other public institutions with the local agricultural supply from smallholders and farmer organisations (FOs). Participating smallholder farmers receive productive support (inputs and extension services), as well as stable and guaranteed market access through institutional food purchases linked to school feeding initiatives. In this sense, the programme seeks to promote synergies between agricultural interventions and school feeding as a major social protection initiative.

The programme has two objectives: the promotion of food and nutrition security for school pupils through the provision of regular school meals, and the promotion of food and nutrition security for smallholder farmers by providing them with secure access to institutional markets.

PAA Africa was initiated in February 2012 as a partnership between the Brazilian government,² the FAO, the WFP and the UK Department for International Development (DFID). A scale-up of the programme within these five countries and the inclusion of two new countries—Kenya and The Gambia—is planned for phase III of the programme, between 2016 and 2019.

This article provides an overview of the implementation of PAA Africa based on the mid-term monitoring results of phase

II of the programme (2014–2016). This monitoring was conducted by the authors and other researchers from the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG 2016). The first two sections of the article outline the implementation details of PAA Africa and describe the different food procurement models employed by the programme. The following sections summarise the monitoring results of phase II of the programme and identify good practices and key challenges. The article concludes by highlighting some insights for PAA Africa's scale-up process in the years to come.

Implementation of the PAA Africa programme

PAA Africa combines the FAO's technical expertise in promoting agricultural production and productivity with the WFP's experience in food assistance, school feeding initiatives and local food procurement. The programme's implementation approach varies across the five implementing countries, according to the existing framework of national policies and programmes, as well as the engagement and capacity of national governments to play an active role in implementation and/or coordination. Despite heterogeneities, three programme components can be identified in all countries:

- **Productive support:** The provision of inputs, training and extension services to farmers and the reinforcement of organisational capacities of FOs to collectively produce, process and market food.
- **Institutional purchases and school feeding:** An institutional buyer (either the WFP, a decentralised government entity or schools, depending on the country) purchases commodities from FOs. Food is then delivered to schools and used in the preparation of school meals. The WFP also provides training

to farmers in post-harvest practices, and to schools in nutrition, food processing and quality (standards) and safety.

- **Strengthening national capacities and improving ownership:** Raising awareness and developing capacities within national ministries and decentralised government structures regarding local food purchases from smallholder farmers, and promoting policy dialogue and international knowledge exchange to leverage institutional procurement in national policies and programmes.

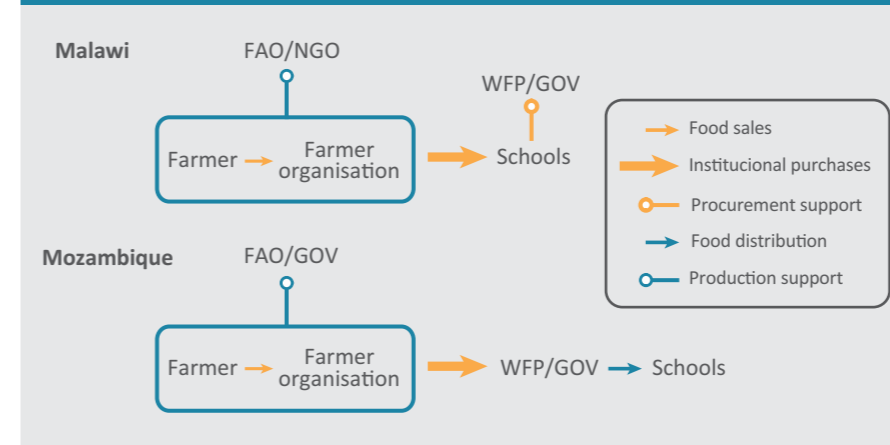
National governments and stakeholders have been involved in each of these three programme components. In many cases, ministries of education and agriculture, as well as national food security councils or secretariats are directly responsible for the implementation of a number of programme activities. National non-governmental organisations also participate in the implementation of programme activities such as training and provision of inputs to beneficiary farmers.

PAA Africa procurement models

The programme has adopted different procurement models in each of the participating countries according to local contexts and capacities. All modalities are decentralised, with food purchases carried out at the district or regional level by the WFP or ministries of education. A key characteristic of PAA Africa is the emphasis on direct purchases from FOs through forward contracts or other forms of agreements, which forgo standard WFP tender procedures. Nevertheless, the WFP aims to ensure that procurement follows food safety and quality requirements, as for any other food purchases the organisation makes.

In some cases, the programme buys food directly from primary FOs, while in other countries farmer cooperative

FIGURE 1: Direct purchases from primary-level FOs



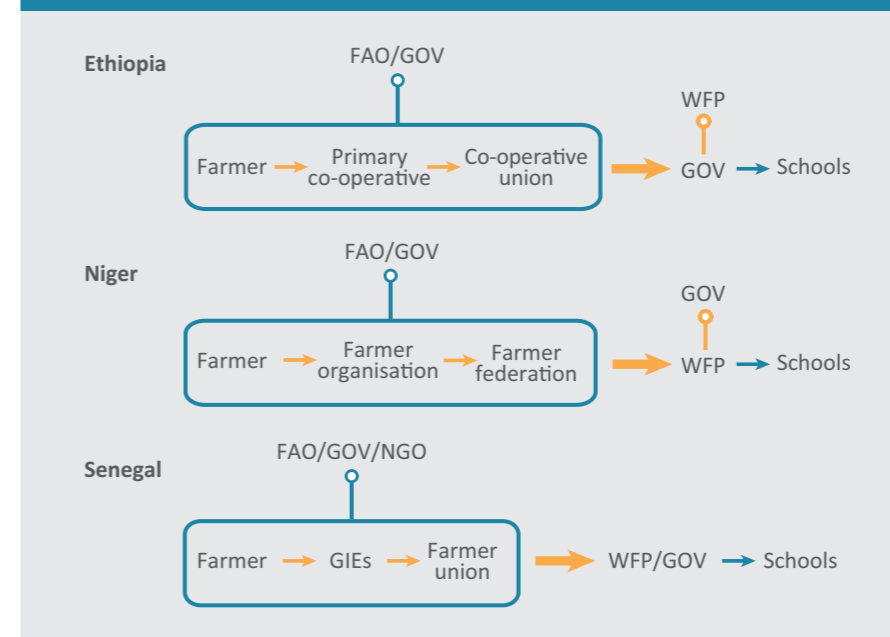
Source: Authors' elaboration.

unions, or farmer federations composed of several primary FOs, have the function of aggregating the produce. As illustrated in Figure 1, this is true for Senegal, Niger and Ethiopia. In Malawi and Mozambique, primary FOs sell their food directly to the WFP and district governments (Mozambique) or to schools (Malawi). Menus are designed according to WFP and government guidelines, while meals are prepared and distributed by school committees comprising parents, teachers and community members.

PAA Africa (phase II) monitoring results

The PAA Africa monitoring framework defined a set of indicators based on programme and country project logical frameworks. It used a mixed-methods approach to produce a more in-depth and contextualised analysis, consisting of the collection of quantitative indicators as well as qualitative research in the five implementing countries. The methodology for data collection drew on regularly collected data by WFP/FAO Country Offices, governments and other

FIGURE 2: Direct purchases from farmer cooperative unions and federations



Source: Authors' elaboration.

“The programme has two objectives: the promotion of food and nutrition security for school pupils through the provision of regular school meals, and the promotion of food and nutrition security for smallholder farmers by providing them with secure access to institutional markets.”

implementing partners. A total of 35 indicators were selected for the monitoring process. Table 1 provides a summary of the mid-term results for the core indicators in the framework. PAA Africa purchased a total of 26.87 tonnes of food, including cereals, legumes, fruits and vegetables, benefiting 15,998 smallholder farmers and over 37,110 schoolchildren (pupils), mostly from primary schools. More information on PAA Africa and details on monitoring results for each country can be found in the executive summaries of the five monitoring reports (IPC-IG 2016).

Programme challenges and good practices

Based on the monitoring results, a number of conclusions can be drawn about PAA Africa and its potential to promote food security and rural development by linking smallholder farmers to institutional markets.

PAA Africa has succeeded in implementing decentralised food procurement models with direct purchases from FOs. The programme illustrates that the institutional food procurement models can be successfully implemented in African countries. Direct purchases from FOs can foster their capacity to produce and market collectively, as well as ensure that smallholder farmers gain a larger share of their income from food sales. Decentralised models also facilitate purchases of fresh food, which contributes to nutrition security.

Nonetheless the monitoring of PAA Africa also identified constraints in procurement procedures that adversely



Photo: Janaina Plessmann/FAO. Children in elementary school receive food through the PAA Africa programme, Mozambique, 2015 <<https://goo.gl/lrxVf4>>.

affected programme purchases, such as: long delays in concluding contracts with FOs; delays in the transfer of school feeding resources to schools/institutional buyers; and long gaps between the delivery of food and payments to farmers, which are particularly problematic given the vulnerable status of programme beneficiaries. The challenges are mostly due to complex WFP quality assurance and reporting procedures. A priority for future phases of the programme should be to further adapt its purchase procedures and increase support strategies to ensure that smallholders can comply with institutional requirements.

The programme has contributed to both dietary and production diversification. In Malawi, Mozambique and Ethiopia, PAA

Africa has diversified school menus by introducing high-protein foods such as legumes, as well as vegetables and fruits. In all countries where the programme was implemented, the provision of agricultural support, together with the demand from schools, has created incentives for smallholders to diversify production and increase domestic consumption of different crops.

The programme needs to promote better coordination between production support and food procurement targeting. PAA Africa provides value by combining productive support (inputs and training) to smallholder farmers with stable access to institutional markets in a single programme. Therefore, it is essential that its targeting mechanism ensures that the same farmers who receive training

and inputs are also offered market access through the same programme. The monitoring process has demonstrated that PAA Africa stakeholders have not yet envisaged a clear strategy for how this can be best achieved.

The programme has promoted national ownership, contributing to the sustainability of home-grown school feeding programmes in participating countries. Governments and non-governmental organisations are actively involved in the implementation of production support and school feeding activities, as well as project coordination through PAA multi-stakeholder forums in which the governments have often played a leading role. National capacities to carry out institutional food procurement were further developed by PAA training and knowledge exchange events. The programme's efforts to promote national ownership have led to the inclusion of PAA Africa in national policy frameworks and budgets in Senegal, Niger and Ethiopia.

Perspectives for the future

PAA Africa is intended to be scaled up within the five original implementing countries and extended to two additional countries. This scale-up process offers new possibilities for research into the programme and presents the opportunity to conduct a rigorous impact evaluation. After this monitoring effort has illustrated that PAA Africa has been implemented successfully, the next logical step is to ask

how the programme has impacted the lives of its beneficiaries. ●

IPC-IG. 2016. *PAA Africa Midterm Monitoring Results – Executive Summaries*. Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth. <https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0Bz2_EEC1fM8adFRBjkyNG5yNOU&usp=drive_web&tid=0Bz2_EEC1fM8abDlabUFzJWpxR2M>. Accessed 1 August 2016.

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1. International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG).

2. PAA Africa was inspired by the institutional demand programmes in Brazil, in particular the Food Acquisition Programme (*Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos—PAA*), from which PAA Africa's name is derived, and the National School Feeding Programme (*Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar—PNAE*). PAA and PNAE have grown into what is believed to be the largest institutional demand initiative in the world (Schwengber et al. 2015).

3. In Mozambique, PAA Africa aimed to procure maize from FOs in the Angonia district. However, maize purchases were delayed until June–August 2016, and no data on these purchases were available when this article was being written.

4. PAA Africa purchases are used to supplement the WFP school feeding programme and are not distributed among specific schools.

5. The number of beneficiary schools fluctuated during phase II due to budget constraints.

TABLE 1: PAA Africa (phase II) mid-term results for core indicators

Country	Number of farmers	Percentage of women	Number of FOs	Quantity of food purchased (Mt)	Commodities	Number of schools	Number of pupils
Ethiopia	2,815	30.2%	26	333.45	Wheat, maize, fava beans and haricot beans	7	9,700
Malawi	3,773	57.9%	6	361	Cereals, pulses, vegetables, fruits and meat	10	10,065
Mozambique	672	38.7%	4	29.97	Vegetables ³	26	8,557
Niger	7,738	40.5%	10	1776.8	Millet and black-eyed beans	N/A ⁴	N/A
Senegal	1,000	47.7%	28	343	Paddy rice	73–159 ⁵	8,788–21,605
Total	15,998	43.1%	74	2687	-	-	-

Source: Authors' elaboration.



Photo: Janaina Plessmann/FAO. Public school students in the Tete province are provided lunch throughout the school year, Mozambique, 2015 <<https://goo.gl/lrxVf4>>.

“ Governments and non-governmental organisations are actively involved in the implementation of production support and school feeding activities.

The dimensions of gender and nutrition in the human right to adequate food

by Anne C. Bellows¹ and Stefanie Lemke²

The development of human rights has an evolutionary character. Our understanding of its breadth and potential unfolds continuously, revealing itself when sparked through the re-examination of human rights content and realisation processes by those who are left out, denied and discriminated against—for example, prisoners, refugees, migrants, women, children, indigenous peoples and peasants (Bellows, Núñez Burbano de Lara, and Viana 2016).

A team of collaborators from FIAN International,³ the Geneva Infant Feeding Association (GIFA) and Hohenheim, Syracuse and Coventry Universities formed a working-group partnership between academia and civil society, asking the question, “when so many call for the inclusion of women and a gender perspective in food and nutrition security, why is the food and nutrition security status of women and girls still not improving?”

The question was framed under a human rights perspective: why is there consistent and systematic failure to address women’s human right to adequate food on an equal basis with men’s? How can human rights evolve to overcome women’s unrelenting marginalisation? To this end, the working group identified two structural disconnects that frustrate the realisation of the right to adequate food for all, and in particular, for women and girls (ibid.).

The first disconnect describes the structural isolation of women’s rights from the human right to adequate food and nutrition. Women’s food and nutrition security is fully dependent on the realisation of all of their interdependent human rights, including sexual and reproductive rights, and yet they are not effectively linked. The patronising invisibility of women inside the male subject domain of “himself and [of] his family” portrayed in the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights (United

Nations General Assembly 1948, paragraph 25.1) and the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (United Nations General Assembly 1966, article 11.1) has been patched up with assurances of non-discrimination.

The 1999 General Comment (GC) 12: The Right to Adequate Food states, for example, that the 1948 Declaration and 1966 Covenant language “does not imply any limitation upon the applicability of this right to individuals or to female-headed households” (United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1999, paragraph 1). Our working group holds that this is insufficient and proposes a separate GC articulation of women’s right to adequate food and nutrition in the context of the 1966 ICESCR.

Likewise, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (United Nations General Assembly 1979) fails to address women’s right to adequate food and nutrition. While the CEDAW Committee⁴ has taken some steps to rectify this omission, however, they are indirect and incomplete. General Recommendation (GR) 34 on the Rights of Rural Women (United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 2016), for example, includes a remarkably holistic approach to the human right to adequate food and nutrition, yet its practical application pertains only to rural women, not all women everywhere. Our working group calls, therefore, for an additional GR articulation of a universal women’s right to adequate food and nutrition.

This first disconnect is exacerbated by discourse that labels women as ‘vulnerable’, as opposed to unlawfully discriminated against. Such language shifts the focus from the structural conditions that generate food and nutrition insecurity, such as gender-unequal access to land tenure and other resources, education and credit. The label of ‘vulnerability’, instead of a recognition of structural human rights violations, results in top-down policy

‘help’ that responds to narrowly perceived needs, as opposed to truly opening space for women’s demands, participation and leadership. Overcoming violations requires power and authority; it is not changed by ‘receiving more’ alone.

In a report by FIAN International et al. (2016) on abuses and human rights violations experienced by the 70 per cent female workforce on Indian tea plantations, recommendations to advance a right to adequate food and nutrition in the context of human rights interdependency call for ending all forms of discrimination against women, implementing decent work, addressing gender prejudice and specifically addressing malnutrition across the life cycle regardless of reproductive activity (p. 75, recommendations 7.1.8.–7.1.11).

Recommendations additionally attempt to shift the perception of women’s ‘vulnerability’ by enhancing their authority to make policy, prosecute violations and develop political collectivities through practical measures, including a reorganisation of “the Tea Board of India to ensure democratic representation of tea workers, [and, most specifically, so] that the women who make up the [70 per cent] majority of tea workers are fairly represented” (p.77, recommendation 7.1.29); and further, that union advocates “should seek to ensure that tea workers are free to join democratic and independent unions of their choice and should train women tea workers to participate fully and at all levels of their unions (p. 79, recommendation 7.6.7).

The second disconnect pertains to the artificial separation of food production from nutrition. Food security and also conservative interpretations of the human right to adequate food overemphasise the importance of food supply at the expense of dietary adequacy, fair, just and sustainable food access, and cultural appropriateness. Estranged from territory and tradition, this disconnect between food production and nutrition



Photo: LWR / Jake Lyell. Women farmers produce diversified vegetables to sell at regional markets and earn a better income for their families, Bihar, India, 2013 <<http://goo.gl/cefU8>>.

presumes that only the global market and the ‘advanced technologies’ that serve it can solve food and nutrition insecurity (Lemke and Bellows 2016). Our critique is that the corporatisation and privatisation of seeds and food production, processing and distribution by the agro-food industry are posited as necessary for sufficient food quantity production (Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 2016), and correspondingly, the global pharmaceutical industry should manufacture and market all requisite nutrients to overcome malnutrition, beginning with processed and fortified foods targeted at infants and young children (IBFAN 2012; Kimura 2013).

As Fukuda-Parr (2016, 103) states, conventional agriculture still emphasises short-term productivity gains, technological solutions and the role of the private sector. This narrative obscures the structural and institutional factors that inhibit people’s access to food, “particularly the role of women and the gendered institutional dynamics in such areas as access to local and global food markets, intra-household allocation of food, and production systems that drive hunger and malnutrition”.

An example of one such initiative that favours a short-sighted and exploitative approach is the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa (NAFSN).⁵ In a recent report by the European Parliament’s Committee for Development (2016, 23; 36) on the NAFSN and the related motion for a European Parliament Resolution, the

report rapporteur “severely questions the ability of mega-PPPs such as NAFSN to contribute to poverty reduction and food security, as the poorest communities risk to bear the brunt of social and environmental risks associated with it [...] the EU and its Member States should stop its current support to NAFSN. Instead, both donors and national governments should invest in a model of agriculture which is sustainable, pro-smallholder farming, pro-women, and which unlocks the potential of domestic and regional markets so as to benefit family farmers and provide quality food for consumers at accessible prices.”

The report further states that the NAFSN model is out of date and provides a disservice to small farmers by creating dependencies on external costly inputs and disregarding their right to participatory decision-making (ibid., 28).

Overcoming market dependency requires the regulation of corporate interference through sovereign and democratic civil society mandates at the local, national and international levels. Unexposed conflicts of interest hide industry profit motives behind putative public health goals—for example, when major fast food manufacturers promote nutrition education (Chan 2013; Moodie et al. 2013; Richter 2015; 2001).

An example of market dependency built through the alienation of food production from nutrition is the commercial expansion of processed foods and medicalised nutrition

“ Women’s food and nutrition security is fully dependent on the realisation of all of their interdependent human rights.

geared toward maternal, infant and young child (MIYC) feeding. Instead of promoting low-cost strategies such as breastfeeding and the preparation of complementary foods based on local food and traditions that maximise women’s confidence, knowledge and self-determination (but that do not necessarily create profit), market-based ‘solutions’ to MIYC malnutrition market highly processed and artificially fortified products that monopolise traditional feeding cultures and local food systems, represent highly lucrative industry growth areas and have been linked to health complications such as obesity and overweight (IBFAN 2012; Lhotska, Scherbaum, and Bellows 2016; Palmer 2009; 2011).

Evidence-based best practices, and those promoted by the World Health Organization, such as exclusive and extended breastfeeding through the International Code on the Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes (World Health Organization 1981), and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions (IBFAN 2011) must be protected through legalised implementation at the national State level to hold corporations accountable to binding law, instead of relying on voluntary and empty assurances of ‘ethical behaviour’. Community knowledge, strength and resilience—especially women’s food work and knowledge—must be respected and supported before corporations may engage public policy avenues to promote their products on the argument of technical and medical capacity.

Such dependency can also be resisted by deepening the autonomy of, and self-determination in, more localised food economies. Many models have been proposed, including: women-centred or women-led local food governance systems; sustainable food systems that decrease distances along the entire food chain between producers and consumers; agroecological and smaller-scale farming models; and community-based food and nutrition security systems that prioritise the inclusion of the most marginalised populations into expanded food economies (Lemke and Bellows 2016).

At the heart of these models is local democratic control over resources such as seeds, land, water and air. To this end, we subscribe to the formal recognition of peoples' and food sovereignty and self-determination through instruments such as the human rights treaties under development for peasants' rights, the right to land, and regarding transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights.⁶

The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) should articulate peoples' and food sovereignty in a separate GC. In all of these acts, women's food sovereignty in the context of the realisation of all of their interrelated human rights must be given central importance. We note and emphasise that women do not face structural violence or discrimination equally, as this experience depends

“Central to the evolution of human rights is the demolition of invisible and previously ignored structural violence and discrimination.”



Photo: Siobhan Jordan/Caritas Australia. Women grow vegetables in a communal nutrition garden for consumption and sales, promoting a nutritious diet, Zimbabwe, 2011 <<http://goo.gl/SZ7V7x>>.

on various factors, such as ethnicity, race, status and geographical location. Nor do women confront violence alone; male members of political minorities, smallholder farmers, indigenous peoples, fisherfolk and herders, among others, also confront social repression. But while such repression is further magnified for women through gender hierarchies, the analysis of gender violence and recommendations for action can and should embrace the participation and perspective of men.

Central to the evolution of human rights is the demolition of invisible and previously ignored structural violence and discrimination that undermine human dignity, impede self-determination and threaten human rights defenders. The evolution of the human right to adequate food and nutrition for all depends on the realisation of the full scope of women's (as well as men's) political and economic rights, as well as on empowered, gender-balanced and democratically organised communities and States that strive for self-determination and equity in more holistic and localised food and nutrition economies. ●

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Photo: UN Photo/Albert González Farran. Women prepare a mixture for feeding malnourished children as well as pregnant and lactating women, North Darfur, Sudan <<http://goo.gl/cefU8>>.

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1. Syracuse University, USA.
2. Coventry University, UK, and University of Hohenheim, Germany.
3. FIAN formerly stood as an acronym for FoodFirst Information Action Network. Today, the NGO simply goes by 'FIAN International'. Its secretariat is the coordinating office of the organisation of national member sections and individual members located in over 50 countries around the world.
4. United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW Committee). See United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN-OHCHR) (2016a).
5. NAFSN was launched in 2012 under the auspices of the G8 as a large public-private partnership (PPP) that aims to leverage private investment in agriculture to improve food security and nutrition in sub-Saharan Africa.
6. For information on a United Nations human rights instrument on: a) peasants' rights, see UN-OHCHR (2016b) and La Via Campesina (2009); b) the human right to land, see UN-OHCHR (2016c) and ESCR-Net (2016); and c) the 'TNC Treaty', see UN-OHCHR (2016d) and Transnational Institute (2015).

Brazil's complex regulatory system for agroecological farming

by Rodrigo A. Noletto¹

There has been a new approach by the agroecology movement in Brazil, aimed at integrating various social, economic and environmental facets of the family farm. This approach has encountered regulatory hurdles that ignore the movement's economic role and impact on the quality of life of family farmers. The country's legislation on food production and processing, for example, is not only outdated regarding the sector's demands, but also incompatible, socially exclusive and morally unjust for social segments left out of public support programmes.

The legal framework for food production in the country is defined by laws, decrees and norms that are part of the health system that sets Brazil's rules for safe food processing and consumption—i.e. it decides what is safe for most of the population to eat. Most food safety standards, however, focus simply on sterilising and homogenising food production. They ignore social and cultural values and promote a globalised industry, to the detriment of wider food diversity and Brazil's own historical and cultural heritage.

To explain the complexity of this aspect of the Brazilian health system requires a look at the differences between the various kinds of food and production processes leading to final products. This is necessary since there are two distinct food safety systems operating over the baffled subjects of their regulation. The key institutions are the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (*Ministério da Agricultura, Pecuária e Abastecimento*—MAPA) and the Brazilian Health Regulatory Agency (*Agência Nacional de Vigilância Sanitária*—ANVISA), which develop concepts and variables for food in Brazil.

MAPA is the higher, central standard-setting authority for state and municipal agriculture and livestock surveillance agencies.² ANVISA runs the National Health Surveillance System (*Sistema Nacional de Vigilância Sanitária*—SNVS)³ and can delegate

certain powers to individual states and municipalities. To license a food-processing business, one must, therefore, at least have an intimate understanding of the final product and its potential markets to know where to begin navigating through the myriad of registration authorities.

Those two variables—product and market—indicate the licensing body and its powers. It might be a municipal or state health department for products under the SNVS. Or it might be a municipal or state department of agriculture for animal products or beverages. In any case, a municipal or state health regulatory office must license all food-processing plants.

Farmers wishing to sell an animal product outside their own state must be licensed by one of eight⁴ federal offices under the MAPA system (*Sistema Unificado de Atenção a Sanidade Agropecuária*—SUASA) to gain access to markets nationwide. Otherwise, they must at least license their product/business in one of MAPA's regional offices, in a state capital.

Dairy producers, for example, who license their business in a municipality⁵ whose local Municipal Inspection System (*Sistema de Inspeção Municipal*—SIM) is not recognised as 'equivalent' by the national regulatory subsystem for animal products⁶ in general (*Sistema Brasileiro de Inspeção de Produtos de Origem Animal*—SISBI-POA) will only be able to sell their products within their own municipality.

SUASA was designed in 2006 to decentralise and redistribute MAPA's powers to states and municipalities. However, it has become a complex mosaic of regulations and subsystems, elaborating rules for the production of inputs and animal- and plant-based foods, each in separate sectors that are entirely distinct. Of the three subsystems, only SISBI-POA is active, due to economic interests underpinning the sale of meat, dairy and related products, especially for export. The subsystems also allow for different degrees of decentralisation.

For example, the Brazilian System for the Inspection of Vegetal Products (*Sistema Brasileiro de Inspeção de Produtos de Origem Vegetal*—SISBI-POV), created by MAPA in 2014, only accepts states equivalent to the federal system, excluding the other 5700 municipalities in the federation, hence hindering family farmers' access to those markets.

Animal food producers wishing to license their production must refer to the Regulations for Industrial and Health Inspection of Animal Products (*Regulamento da Inspeção Industrial e Sanitária de Produtos de Origem Animal*—RIISPOA),⁷ issued by Decree no. 30.691, dating back to 1952. These 'agro-industrial' food production regulations set standards far beyond the capacities of family farms, keeping most of the sector outside the formal market, such as public procurement. That legislation⁸ is currently being revised, but it still excludes farmers who cannot fit into rigid agro-industrial standards designed for large companies.

One attempt to reduce the abyss between outlying sectors and MAPA was the publication of MAPA's Normative Instruction (IN16) 16/2015,⁹ aimed at the 'agro-industrialisation' of animal products on small farms, for small-scale family farmers and others with built-up areas smaller than 250 m². This is expected to regulate five sectors: meat, fish, dairy, eggs and bee products. Yet IN16 was issued without consultation with any of these sectors or even with MAPA's own technical staff, whose resistance has created difficulties in the regulatory process.

However, IN16 did, in fact, bring about significant progress, with principles such as 'reasonableness', 'transparent procedures', 'rationalisation and simplification for health licensing', among others, figuring in ANVISA's Resolution RDC 49.¹⁰ IN16 also recognises the multifunctionality of production centres—i.e. more than one production activity taking place within the same facility—and provides exemptions from licensing and health inspection fees.



Photo: Flávio Costa. Family farm, Paraíba, Brazil, 2012 <<http://goo.gl/CQFr03>>.

Despite such progress, the regulatory process first began with the dairy sector. MAPA brought together different stakeholders and other relevant players, but no representatives of the sectors directly affected by IN16 took part in the discussions.¹¹ The only representation of the concerns of family farmers was through the Ministry of Agrarian Development (*Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário*—MDA), which gathered proposals and discussed them with MAPA. In May 2016, the interim government shut down the MDA and incorporated a portion of it into MAPA and the rest into the new Ministry of Social and Agrarian Development (*Ministério do Desenvolvimento Social e Agrário*—MDSA).

Prior to this, on 17 December 2015, MAPA published a draft of IN17, with a 60-day consultation period. It is very hard for any family-farmer representatives to access MAPA's public consultations, which are all online and barely publicised at all. Family-

farmer representatives would probably make important contributions, with their vast technical and empirical expertise that all too often represent the basis for scientific knowledge. MAPA, however, remains completely indifferent by treating unequal sectors as equals and by always keeping family farmers at a distance.

Meanwhile, ANVISA's legislative approach shows that it is actually possible for laws to cater to the majority of family farmers. For the first time, family farmers and solidarity businesses¹² had their production recognised, to protect practices, customs, habits and traditional knowledge. Unlike other norms, including ANVISA, there was a wide process of public consultations in Brazil in which family-farmer representatives, indigenous peoples and traditional communities actually participated. ANVISA's Collegiate Board Resolution No. 49/2013 has aimed mainly at being a facilitator and a guiding instrument to an audience that had been

“The country's legislation on food production and processing is not only outdated regarding the sector's demands, but also incompatible, socially exclusive and morally unjust for social segments left out of public support programmes.”

so far marginalised in the health surveillance system. As opposed to MAPA's systems and subsystems, a single health surveillance system (the SNVS) decentralises actions and delegates them down to municipalities. In practical terms, businesses licensed by a municipal health authority could market their goods nationwide. The problem with SNVS, however, had been the absence of a specific policy for family-farm businesses, taking into account their inherent characteristics. Like MAPA, health surveillance inspectors—with rare exceptions—made no distinction in their evaluations.

To overcome that limitation, social movements supported by ANVISA's Collegiate Board came together at the time to draft RDC 49/2013, in which the SNVS finally recognised the role of family farmers and solidarity businesses, their customs and traditional knowledge. Given the unified nature of the SNVS, nonetheless,

“There has been a new approach by the agroecology movement in Brazil, aimed at integrating various social, economic and environmental facets of the family farm.”

TABLE 1: Simplified differentiation between food regulatory authorities, by type of food

Foods regulated by MAPA	Foods regulated by ANVISA
Beverages in general: Non-alcoholic beverages (fruit pulp, juice and nectar, soft drinks, powdered drinks, etc.), alcoholic beverages, fermented beverages	All other processed foods Some of which must be registered
Animal products: Meats, dairy, eggs, honey, fish and associated by-products	Food additives
Fresh plant products	Mineral water

“ MAPA remains completely indifferent by treating unequal sectors as equals and by always keeping family farmers at a distance.



Photo: Sergio Amaral/MDS. Low income family farmers raising cattle, Goiás, Brazil, 2014 <<http://goo.gl/2NrzUr>>.

the Resolution must be publicised and detailed for states and municipalities, in particular to ensure exemption from local health surveillance fees.¹³ Local inspectors must also be trained in changes such as using guidelines for ‘simplification’, ‘rationalisation’, ‘standard procedures’ and ‘reasonable requirements’.

This innovation by ANVISA has not only led to the recognition of family and artisan producers but has also stimulated a nationwide discussion on how to draft new legal frameworks for family farmers and traditional peoples and communities. Rural social movements representing healthy food manufacturers in culturally diverse settings now hope that ANVISA’s initiative can be expanded in the future to eliminate all barriers to marketing these healthy products to an ever-expanding consumer market. ●

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Photo: Rafael Zart/MDSA. Pepper jam produced by family farmers. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2016 <<https://goo.gl/gcZMvd>>.

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1. Consultant for the Instituto Sociedade, População e Natureza (ISPN) and Coordinator of the Programme for Small Eco-social Projects in the Amazon (*Fundo Amazônia*).

2. Decree no. 5,741 (March 2006) established the Unified Agriculture and Livestock Health System (*Sistema Unificado de Atenção a Sanidade Agropecuária—SUASA*).

3. The SNVS and ANVISA were created by Law no. 9,782 of 26 January 1999.

4. Only the states of Bahia (the only one in the Northeast), Goiás, the Federal District, Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul have animal-product inspection systems deemed to be equivalent to SISBI-POA, allowing local producers to market their products nationwide.

5. According to the National Confederation of Municipalities (*Confederação Nacional de Municípios—CNM*), in 2012, only 17 per cent of Brazil’s municipalities had set up a SIM entitled to license local animal products and their sale, even inside the municipality.

6. Decree 5,741/2006 created the SUASA and the Brazilian Systems for the Inspection of Agriculture and Livestock Products and Inputs: 1) Brazilian System for the Inspection of Plant Products; 2) Brazilian System for the Inspection of Animal Products (SISBI-POA); and 3) Brazilian System for the Inspection of Agricultural and Livestock Inputs. Today, however, only the SISBI-POA has been regulated and is operational. In 2014, MAPA issued its IN20 to set up the Plant SUASA, allowing states and the Federal District to join the federal system and market their produce nationwide.

7. See <http://www.agricultura.gov.br/arq_editor/file/Aniamal/MercadoInterno/Requisitos/RegulamentoInspecaoIndustrial.pdf>.

8. The restructure of RIIISPOA began in 2007, after 58 years. The regulation guides the production and improvement of all products of animal source in Brazil, going from 858 to 644 articles.

9. IN16, June 2015, providing specific norms for health inspections and oversight of animal products, for small-scale agro-industries.

10. Resolution 49 by ANVISA’s Collegiate Board, dated 31 October 2013, on the health-related licensing of activities in the following sectors: 1) individual micro-entrepreneurs; 2) rural family-owned businesses; and 3) economic solidarity businesses.

11. According to the account of a meeting that took place on 22 October 2015 to discuss IN16, there was only one company representative, who was not even from the family farming sector. The Ministry’s justification for this was that they conduct public consultations on the internet.

12. Family farmers and solidarity economy businesses are different categories that can benefit from RDC 49. The federal government has different systems to register that audience. The family farmer is identified through a self-declaratory form (DAP—Pronaf Declaration of Aptitude). The solidarity economy business is identified through a national record (CADSOL—National Record of Solidarity Economy Businesses).

13. Fee exemption is one of RDC 49’s main benefits, since it provides conditions for family farmers and solidarity economy businesses. For instance, the business control fee—mandatory for obtaining the final regulation—can cost up to BRL1257. In addition to the business, each product has a registration cost. RDC 49 exempts both categories, but is conditional on the states and municipalities also being registered.

Global convergence of land and water struggles in West Africa: building an economic community

by Massa Koné,¹ Chantal Jacovetti,² and Valentin Hategekimana³

The Global Convergence of Land and Water Struggles was born in October 2014 at the Africa Social Forum in Dakar and affirmed in March 2015 at the World Social Forum in Tunis (FIAN International 2015a). Its first regional branch in West Africa was established in June 2015 during a meeting at the international Nyéléni Sélingué agroecology training centre in Mali (FIAN International 2015a).

The Convergence was formed by several social and grass-roots movements and civil society organisations committed to the defence of rights to land, water and seeds. Its cornerstone is the Declaration ‘Rights to Water and Land, a Common Struggle—Dakar to Tunis: Declaration of the Global Convergence of Land and Water Struggles’ (Global Convergence of Land and Water Struggle 2015).

This document contains the vision, principles and aspirations of the Convergence and constitutes a basis for building a strong and united movement to fight for policies and practices that emphasise human rights, and the rights to land and water as part of food sovereignty (Amnesty International and FIAN International 2010).

Same damage, same fight

Land and water grabbing promotes harmful industrial agriculture at the expense of both rural and urban communities. This situation puts people’s lives at risk and jeopardises family farming, which feeds and employs 70 per cent⁴ of the population of West Africa (Caravane Ouest Africaine 2016, 3) and contributes to an average 40 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) globally (ibid., 11). Human rights violations related to land- and water-grabbing practices (forced evictions and migration, discrimination against women etc.) are committed with impunity, leading

to the destruction of communities’ social cohesion, cultural identity and local food systems, with disastrous consequences for ecosystems and agroecosystems.⁵

This social and economic disruption paves the way for unsafe migration, whether by boat across the Mediterranean, through gold mining areas or through the crossroads of cities and even areas controlled by armed groups. Moreover, the ability of donor countries and multinational corporations to influence laws for their benefit and to impose a model of industrial agriculture through programmes such as the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the G7 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, and Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) threatens and destabilises countries, peoples and their economies, and undermines their sovereignty.

Chemical herbicides and pesticides, hybrid seeds and genetically modified organisms, the concentration, selection and intensification of livestock farming, the prevalence of monoculture and excessive mechanisation go against the tenets of peasant agroecology.⁶ Family farming⁷ and peasant agroecology are key elements of an agriculture that is innovative and sensitive to the knowledge and practices of communities, which preserves and enriches the soil, the environment and biodiversity and has little or no impact on global warming.

The States of West Africa, including entities such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa (UEMOA), should be weary of promises of free trade agreements such as the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). These were initiated by the European Union (EU) in 2000, aiming to promote economic development and reduce poverty in West Africa (European Commission Directorate-

General for Trade 2015). However, by forcing this sub-region to forfeit most of its trade protection mechanisms vis-à-vis imports of EU products, the EPAs will primarily serve the interests of a handful of European multinational corporations at the expense of the most vulnerable populations of West Africa and their livelihoods.

Faced with this dire situation, more than 10,000 people—comprising women, men and youth from 12 countries of West Africa⁸—came together from 3 to 19 March 2016 to share proposals for a strong West Africa that respects the rights of communities and people’s common interests such as land, water and seeds.

This gathering took the form of a caravan with social and grass-roots movements from each country. The caravan started in Burkina Faso, continued through Mali and ended up in Dakar, Senegal. Along the way, it travelled through 11 cities.⁹ Several groups from different communities, organisations and movements and government officials joined the caravan activities, which included debates, workshops and visits to areas where forced evictions had taken place.

These activities helped people share their experiences and understand the importance of uniting to overcome similar challenges. The caravan represented a great opportunity to build relationships and strengthen a sub-regional movement between countries to increase pressure on governments and institutions to ensure that the voices of people throughout the region are heard with regard to upholding the rights of communities, in line with the promotion of family farming based on peasant agroecology and the concept of food sovereignty.

The caravan was an opportunity for the Convergence to present its ‘Green Book’ to different authorities en route. The objective was (and remains) to engage national



Photo: Eduardo Arraes. Children carrying buckets of water, Lakka, Sierra Leone, 2011 <<https://goo.gl/cefU8>>.

political and administrative authorities as well as sub-regional institutions (ECOWAS and UEMOA) in relation to their obligations regarding the realisation of human rights, and to call on them to adopt the demands and proposals contained in the Green Book regarding the implementation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Guidelines on the Right to Food, the Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure, the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa—including their sub-regional manifestation, developed at ECOWAS—as well as regulation of the risks of biotechnologies that are being developed at UEMOA. It is critical that these processes are transparent and ensure the effective participation of the organisations that represent the most vulnerable populations. The Green Book contains people’s aspirations and proposals. Its purpose is to:

- sensitise the populations of West African countries about land, water and seed grabbing as well as the challenges and issues regarding these resources;
- mobilise West African organisations and social movements, to build a strong movement to affirm the rights of communities and promote family farming, based on peasant agroecology and food sovereignty;
- take action for peace, social and environmental justice and equity, gender equality, public health and the struggle against climate change; and

- support all activists and communities that are defending human rights linked to land, water and seeds, and denounce their criminalisation.

At the end of the caravan, the Green Book was presented to the current Chairman of ECOWAS, Mr. Macky Sall, President of Senegal, and the Global Network for the Right to Food and Nutrition held a conference in Dakar.

What is next?

The first event undertaken by the Global Convergence of Land and Water Struggles in West Africa has been successful, and activities should continue. It is developing a coordinating committee at the regional level, together with its national platforms. The Convergence provides credible solutions to support food sovereignty, family farming, agroecology and participation in decision-making—particularly in relation to food systems, nutrition and agriculture. Members are considering alternative activities regarding common concerns, to enable them to influence governments and institutions. Plans include an agenda for joint activities and an alert system to support victims and activists who have been harassed, imprisoned or criminalised while advocating for common interests, the future of the planet and humanity. The Convergence hopes that the other regions of Africa and the world will build their own movements to help support the same cause. ●

“ Land and water grabbing promotes harmful industrial agriculture at the expense of both rural and urban communities.

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“ Family farming and peasant agroecology are key elements of an agriculture that is innovative and sensitive to the knowledge and practices of communities.



Photo: Ollivier Girard/CIFOR. Man at his garden where he grows fruits and vegetables, Sanfo Karim, Burkina Faso, 2013 <<http://goo.gl/uk4xos>>.

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1. Union des Associations et Coordinations d’associations pour le Développement et la Défense des Droits des Démunis (UACDDDD) and Convergence Malienne contre l’Accapement des Terres (CMAT).

2. Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes du Mali (CNOP) and CMAT.

3. FoodFirst Information and Action Network (FIAN International).

4. The Green Book of the West Africa Convergence is an advocacy tool for improving and complying with policies and legislation on

land, water and farmers’ seeds in West Africa. It contains an analysis of the West African reality on land, water and peasant seeds, as well as of structural problems that are a source of abuses and violations of community rights. It also highlights a vision of and credible proposals for the management and use of natural resources for the well-being of both urban and rural populations.

5. For example, a case of forced eviction in Uganda in which approximately 4,000 people were forced by the government army to leave their land, which was then given to Kaweri Coffee Plantation Ltd., a 100 per cent subsidiary of the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe (NKG) based in Hamburg, Germany, is a good illustration. This case has been documented by FIAN International since 2002 (FIAN International 2015c).

6. For the definition of peasant agroecology, see, for instance, Rosset and Martínez-Torres (2012): for many, agroecology is a science: the science that studies and attempts to explain the functioning of agroecosystems.

For others, the word agroecology refers to the principles—not recipes—that guide the agronomic and productive practices that permit the production of food and fiber without agrochemicals. For the social movements that make up *La Via Campesina*, the concept of agroecology goes much further than just ecological-productive principles. In addition to these, *La Via Campesina* incorporates social, cultural and political principles and goals into its concept of agroecology.

7. For the definition of family farming, see, for instance FAO (2014): family farming is a means of organising agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production which is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family labour, including both women’s and men’s.

8. Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

9. Ouagadougou, Houndé, Bobo Dioulasso, Sikasso, Bamako, Kayes, Tambacounda, Mékhé, Koalack, Diarniadio and Dakar.

“ The Convergence provides credible solutions to support food sovereignty, family farming, agroecology and participation in decision-making.



Photo: Adam Cohn. Fisherman casting his net at Dassa Zoume, Benin, 2008 <<http://goo.gl/cefU8>>.

The ProSAVANA Programme and the controversies of Brazilian cooperation in promoting Africa’s new green revolution

by Mariana Santarelli¹

From 2003 to 2011, Brazil’s involvement in international cooperation for development grew significantly, transforming the country from being predominantly a recipient of cooperation initiatives into a donor. At the time, the country projected itself internationally as a pro-development State, capable of growing economically, reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion—a country capable of turning the agricultural sector into one of the most important drivers of national development and ensuring food and nutrition security through public policies to combat hunger, and a sort of inspiration for African leaders. Strengthening its ties with other countries of the global South was a priority for Brazil’s foreign and trade policies, led by parallel—and at times complementary—strategies of launching large Brazilian corporations internationally and offering technical cooperation to other developing countries. International organisations portrayed Brazil as a country capable of disseminating visions of development and good public policy practices to other countries of the South. This resulted in a Brazilian technical cooperation boom during the eight years of the Lula government (2003–2011) that was even more significant in the fields of agriculture and food and nutrition security, driven by an international scenario that sought answers to the global food crisis of 2007–2008.

In this context, several cooperation agreements were signed with the purpose of transferring Brazilian policy experiences in agriculture and food and nutrition security to African countries, particularly Portuguese-speaking ones. The largest and most controversial among them is the ProSAVANA programme, a trilateral agreement between the governments of Brazil, Mozambique and Japan launched in 2011 to support rural development in Mozambique’s Nacala Corridor. The programme was rife with mistrust and

dispute from the beginning, which ended up consolidating a broad global resistance movement led by the National Peasants’ Union of Mozambique (*União Nacional de Camponeses*—UNAC) and supported by other social movements and organisations from Mozambique, Brazil, Japan and the rest of the world. The movement initially took shape as a reaction to the first news about the programme, which hinted at the prospect of internationalising Brazilian agribusiness and reproducing the Japan–Brazil Agricultural Development Cooperation Programme for the *Cerrado* (PRODECER) in the Mozambican savannah.

Launched at the end of the 1970s, PRODECER aimed to expand production of global food commodities—particularly soybeans—which caused the Centre-West of Brazil to be parcelled up into large rural properties, essentially turning the *Cerrado* biome into a grain granary. Local resistance converged with international networks that were denouncing the purchase of large rural landholdings by foreign investors in developing countries, a phenomenon known as land grabbing. ProSAVANA ultimately became one of the most iconic local translations of the controversies surrounding different rural development visions and ways to ensure global food security, and even about international cooperation efforts linked to this agenda on the African continent.

One more alliance to promote the Green Revolution and open up new agricultural and mining frontiers in Africa

As initially designed—based on transferring to a new continent Brazilian innovation in tropical agriculture developed with the advent of the agricultural technology revolution of the 1960s and 1970s—ProSAVANA can be regarded as one of the many networks of players that supports what Patel (2013) considered an ongoing process of promoting the Long Green Revolution.² At the start of the programme, and

building on intricate relations between investments, financing and technical cooperation, the governments of Brazil, Japan and Mozambique tried to devise a new international arrangement geared towards promoting a new stage of the Green Revolution in Africa.³ A new alliance formed through new dynamics distinct from the ones usually analysed—such as the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the New Alliance for Food and Nutrition Security (New Alliance)—which tend to focus on maintaining the status quo between North and South, as well as the central position occupied by the USA, the G7 and associated corporations, in the global food systems. ProSAVANA can be seen as a network of actors and interests originating from a previous partnership between Japan and Brazil, focused on the consolidation of agricultural and mineral global commodity chains, intent on expanding its frontiers along the Nacala Logistic Development Corridor.

As far as South–South technical cooperation is concerned, in this trilateral partnership, Brazil originally took on the role of transmitting visions and technologies for rural development. Before crossing the Atlantic, the Brazilian government managed to create a convincing ‘success story’: a rural development prescription for the Mozambican savannah that used the *Cerrado* biome as landscape, and PRODECER as the reference policy. The country’s expertise in tropical agriculture, developed by the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa), was the technological innovation to be transferred, and the large rural producers from Brazil the key agents in this ambitious rural development project.

Adaptations and disconnects in the transfer of rural development visions and policies

One of the main destabilising factors of ProSAVANA’s original design was the

resistance movement spearheaded by the UNAC. As a response, in 2013 the programme began a process of resignification in an effort to shed any signs of commercial interest and redesign its strategies with a new focus on integrating small farmers into commercial agriculture. This was an important turning point in ProSAVANA's trajectory, as Brazilian cooperation basically left the scene and Mozambique started playing a more leading role in the programme, strengthening its partnership with Japan.

Given that Brazilian players lost relevance in the process, a pertinent question comes to mind: Why was the proposal of transferring development visions and public policies—which characterises the emerging Brazilian South-South Cooperation—not upheld in the ProSAVANA design? Or even: at this turning point, when small farmers became the focus, why did Brazilian policies to strengthen family farming not become reference frameworks for South-South Cooperation? These questions point to the main disconnects in the transfer process—that is, the differences between the conditions for implementation in each context, which may even be so pronounced as to render unfeasible any attempt to adapt visions and public policies between territories with different social, cultural, political and economic realities. Such questions are raised to provoke reflection on the obstacles and possibilities of the diffusion of Brazilian public policies for agriculture and food

and nutrition security as a reference for South-South cooperation with African countries, in a local and global context of disputes over development paradigms and strategies to guarantee food rights.

Various authors agree that the developmentalist States of the first Green Revolution were crucial in ensuring what they consider its 'success' (Holt-Gimenez, Altieri, and Rosset 2006; Patel 2013). Technological transfer alone does not explain the structuring of a competitive food commodities sector in the 1970s and 1980s in Brazil, which resulted, above all, from the credit, subsidised insurance and guaranteed minimum price policies that remain in place even today. Besides that, the inclusion of Brazilian small farmers in commercial agriculture relies on a unique family farming policy underpinned by subsidised credit mechanisms, agricultural insurance, rural extension and institutional procurement, among others.

In Mozambique, on the other hand, with the liberal reforms of the 1980s, rural technical assistance was de-structured, and almost all forms of agricultural subsidies were eliminated—a process that relegated agricultural policies to a secondary position. Even though agriculture has recently become a priority, driven by political compromises of the African Union leaders with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the seemingly prevalent rationale consists of attracting foreign private investment to finance agriculture.

“ProSAVANA can be seen as a network of actors and interests originating from a previous partnership between Japan and Brazil, focused on the consolidation of agricultural and mineral global commodity chains.



Photo: Marcos Villalta/Save the Children. Woman brings water to the crops thanks to an irrigation project, Sofala, Mozambique, 2010 <<http://goo.gl/cefU8>>.



Photo: Sergio Amaral/MDS. Smallholder farmers and suppliers of the Food Acquisition Programme (PAA), Federal District, Brazil, 2014 <<http://goo.gl/OAQfn>>.

Brazilian cooperation, which takes shape in the ProSAVANA programme, proposed transferring technologies and agribusiness entrepreneurs without recognising that this is just part of the formula for success, which would be ineffective if not for the decisive support of the State through a wide range of public policies aimed at promoting rural development.

This strategy seems unlikely to be reproduced in Mozambique, both because the main donors—such as Japan and the USA—guide their actions by neoliberal and minimal state intervention policies, and because of the limited public budgets of African nations. Here lies one of the most relevant disconnects of the transfer process, which explains why Brazil is no longer regarded as a South-South reference in the ProSAVANA context.

The fact that Brazil's policies for strengthening family farming did not serve as a reference for ProSAVANA's new design is also explained by the increasingly clear orientation of the programme to hold medium- and large-scale rural producers responsible for including small-scale ones in agribusiness chains through contract farming arrangements. This presupposes a reduced State, relegated mostly to a weak regulatory role and to creating an enabling environment to attract private investments, to the detriment of creating specific public policies for family farming.

Another relevant disconnect lies in the process of transferring tropical agricultural technology led by Embrapa. The premises of similar agricultural conditions and natural endowments on which the discourse of various Brazilian cooperation agents is based when referring to cooperation with Africa were confirmed in the adaptation of the technological platform. However, the effectiveness of the adaptation process cannot be analysed as a mere technological transfer without taking cultural and socio-economic aspects into consideration.

Embrapa's technological platform is not well suited to the profile of Nacala Corridor farmers—small-scale, low-income producers who use short-handled hoes. Peasants in ProSAVANA's area of operations lack the financial resources needed to access technological packages consisting of modern varieties of seeds, fertilisers and pesticides which disregard their traditional farming practices.

As for Embrapa's activities in Africa, we must remain watchful of the extent to which the ongoing South-South exchange will pave the way for the entry of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Most African countries do not have either an official political position regarding the possible entry of GMOs or functioning biosafety legislations. Brazil (and particularly Embrapa), however, has amassed vast experience in developing and applying

such technologies, which have been broadly introduced in the Cerrado biome.

Ever since colonial times, including during the rural socialisation project, the prevalent development vision in Mozambique has undervalued traditional farming practices and failed to acknowledge the voice of peasants, resulting in an almost complete absence of public policies capable of responding to the profile and demands of Mozambican farmers. Despite its declared focus on small rural producers, ProSAVANA does nothing to reverse this process. Quite the contrary: it continues along the lines of other international cooperation for development strategies, banking on the belief that rural development in the Nacala Corridor will be achieved by creating an enabling environment for private and foreign investment in agriculture, instead of through specific public policies targeting local family farmers. ●

Holt-Gimenez, E., M. Altieri, and P. Rosset. 2006. "Ten Reasons Why the Rockefeller and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundations' Alliance for Another Green Revolution Will Not Solve the Problems of Poverty and Hunger in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Policy Brief* No.12. Oakland, CA: Food First.

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1. Reference Centre for Food Sovereignty and Security (CERESAN) of the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro (*Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro—UFRRJ*).

2. Patel (2013) argues that the Green Revolution, usually interpreted as a process that began in 1940 and lasted until 1970, started before then and continues even today. He proposes the adoption of a long-lasting analytical perspective which allows a better understanding of the origins and consequences of the changes still in progress.

3. The first Green Revolution (1940–1970) is usually interpreted as a US-driven strategy of agricultural technology transfer (hybrid seeds, fertilisers etc.) to developing countries, particularly in Latin and Central America and Asia. The second Green Revolution is seen as a response to the latest food crises—a new phase with similar objectives and a focus on the integration of African farmers into global commodity chains.

The impact of the international fisheries agreements on food sovereignty: the case of Cabo Verde

by Sandra Helena Barros Martins¹

Cabo Verde is a small island State, encompassing 10 islands and 13 islets with a total area of 4033 km² in the northern Atlantic Ocean, approximately 450 km off the western coast of Africa. In 1460, Portuguese sailors arrived and eventually initiated a settlement of the islands in 1462, taking advantage of the geo-strategic location of the archipelago for economic trade. The islands were uninhabited when they arrived, hence the present-day population evolved from African slaves and Europeans settlers in a colonial process that “substantially destroyed the ethnic memories of the slaves” (Dos Anjos 2004, 273). The current population is around 500,000 inhabitants, according to the most recent census (INE 2012).

Recurrent famines during the colonial period (1462–1975) caused by adverse climatic factors and inadequate colonial policies that failed to understand the challenges related to insularity drastically decimated the island population. Famine was a constant until the 1960s. In fact, during the last famine of the 1950s, the country lost 18 per cent of its population. This tragedy strongly conditioned the demographic, social, economic and political context of the islands (Carreira 1985). In 1975, Cabo Verde obtained its independence after a joint war with Guinea-Bissau against an oppressive Portuguese regime.

In 40 years of independence, the country's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita grew from USD417 in 1975 to approximately USD3000 in 2012 (INE 2015). Poverty rates fell from 49 per cent in 1990 to 27 per cent in 2007. Moreover, a review of the Gini coefficient, as a measure of inequality, shows a marked evolution, from 0.43 in 1998 to 0.47 in 2007, after a peak at 0.53 in 2002 (INE 2007). The limited infrastructure (transportation and social infrastructure) and small industrial sector are responsible for the country's structural trade deficit.

Development aid and remittances from the Cabo Verde diaspora have been critical contributing factors to the country's economic growth.² The tertiary sector employs the majority of the active working population (57 per cent), and there is considerable room to expand and improve productive sectors, such as fishery and agriculture, which absorb 14 per cent of the total work force. According to the African Development Bank (AfDB 2016), public debt represented 107 per cent of GDP at the end of 2014 and was expected to reach 118 per cent in 2015. The food system in Cabo Verde is characterised by strong dependence on the external market. The primary sector represents only 9 per cent of GDP, with 3 per cent derived from fisheries. The public policy strategies aiming at reducing dependence on external markets focus on increasing internal production from agriculture and fisheries while establishing linkages between tourism and the primary sector.

Despite its economic vulnerabilities, in 2007 Cabo Verde became only the second country to ever graduate from the status of ‘least developed country’ (LDC)³ (AfDB 2012). Good governance is highlighted as the factor that most contributed towards this graduation. This new status has implications for the country's capacity to finance development and for the policy options available due to the reduction of public development aid.

Although the exclusive economic zone covers an extensive area of about 785,000 km², the continental shelves around the Cabo Verde islands are generally narrow, thus limiting the available area for productive fisheries. Fishery resources are not large, but they do include commercially important migratory species such as tuna, as well as other small pelagic and some demersal fish.⁴

In terms of food security, fish are the main source of animal protein for the local population. The per capita consumption

of fishery products increased from 19 kg in 1998 to 26.5 kg in 2011 (UNDP 2016). Fishing continues to generate an increasing number of direct jobs (i.e. fishermen, fish saleswomen, sailors and factory operators), which grew from representing 5 per cent of the active population in 2012 to 8 per cent in 2014 (INE 2014).

According to the World Bank (2014, 59), “the ocean is the only resource that the country owns in abundance, and considering its strategic location the goal is to transform the ocean into a competitive advantage and to use it for conducting all sorts of economic activities”. Although the government established an ambitious target for the growth of the fisheries sector, the commercial linkages between the fishery and the tourism sectors are still weak. Additionally, about 80 per cent of the fish consumed by the tourist industry are imported (UNDP 2016). Poverty rates among fisheries workers is 35 per cent, while national levels are around 27 per cent (World Bank 2014).

These social and economic vulnerabilities constitute a significant challenge towards achieving food sovereignty and the human right to adequate food and nutrition. The identification of public policy strategies aimed at ensuring food and nutritional security can create new vulnerabilities for generations to come.

Fisheries agreements

In 2007, Cabo Verde established a special partnership with the European Union (EU), taking into account its status as a Peripheral Region Nation sharing much in common with the EU's outermost regions of the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands. The EU considers this special partnership a political approach, which goes beyond the traditional donor–beneficiary relationship and responds to common interests related to global security and development.

In this regard, Cabo Verde has signed fisheries agreements with Japan, China



Photo: BigMikeSndTech. Fish market at Tarrafal, Cabo Verde, 2009 <<http://goo.gl/sZ7V7x>>.

and the EU. These agreements authorise the fishing of highly migratory species in Cabo Verde waters. The country is a signatory of the Cotonou Agreement⁵ with the EU and, therefore, receives associated tariff preferences, and is a beneficiary of the European Development Fund (EDF). The most significant fishery agreement is with the EU and was adopted by Council Regulation (EC) No. 2027/2006 (EU 2006). The agreement came into force on 30 March 2007 for a period of five years and has been tacitly renewed until 2017. It provides fishing opportunities for tuna and tuna-like species for up to 71 EU vessels from Spain, France and Portugal in Cabo Verdean waters. Following the expiration of the 2011–2014 Protocol, a new four-year Protocol was signed on 23 December 2014, with the EU contributing a total of EUR550,000 per year for the first two years and EUR500,000 per year for the last two years. Half of this amount should be invested in fisheries policy, surveillance and support to fishing communities. For the EU, these protocols entail allowing access to fishery resources at the lowest possible cost and securing employment for Europeans. For Cabo Verde, it represents additional resources to finance the national development agenda, not only from the agreement itself but also for the possibility of accessing others funds and partnerships with EU member countries.

According to an external evaluation of the 2006–2011 agreement commissioned by the EU, the added value for the EU economy was estimated at EUR1.98 million/year (excluding downstream value added). The evaluation estimated that for every

EUR1 the EU spent on the agreement, EUR3.6 was generated. For Cabo Verde, the partnership agreement provided about 24 per cent of the current public investment in the fisheries sector, thus contributing towards the economic development and sustainability of the sector. The agreement has a particular impact on building institutional capacity, providing facilities for small-scale fisheries and improving compliance with EU sanitary conditions for trade in fishery products—all important conditions to increase the economic contribution of the fisheries sector (Oceanic Development and MegaPesca 2010).

The current agreement has triggered a public reaction demanding an in-depth analysis of its social, economic and environmental impacts. These fishing agreements threaten the fishing stock and negatively impact the livelihoods of Cabo Verdean fisherfolk. The lack of information provided to local communities, combined with weak negotiating capacities, are two main factors that clearly demonstrate the unequal power structure that defined the agreement. The mechanisms to promote social participation to define, implement and monitor the agreements, and to monitor food and nutritional security policies in general, are very weak. As an example, only three out of 15 seats in the National Food Security and Nutrition Council are held by civil society organisations, while governmental institutions represent 70 per cent of counsellors. The former Minister of Infrastructure and Marine Economy, after

“ In terms of food security, fish are the main source of animal protein for the local population.

the signature of the last agreement with the EU, highlighted the weakness of the country, and West African countries in general, to negotiate favourable fishery agreement terms. The lack of coordination between the coastal nations of West Africa leads to differences in compensation from country to country, even if the available fishery resources are strictly the same.⁶

The independence of African countries represented an opportunity for Africans to be agents of their own decisions and visions for development. In fact, the new configuration of international inequalities that derived from the de-colonisation process forced a number of developing countries, including Cabo Verde, to internalise this new approach and consider their economic dependence from a perspective of food sovereignty and food and nutrition security.

The analysis of the existing agreements from this perspective highlights the difficulties in balancing out two issues: finding the appropriate mechanisms to finance development while ensuring the human right to adequate food and nutrition.

To reconcile these two polarising factors is indeed a huge challenge for Cabo Verde. The establishment of mechanisms that could facilitate broad social participation can play an important role in improving governance and accountability. These partnerships and agreements could present a valid alternative to access resources with a view to financing development; however,

“ Social and economic vulnerabilities constitute a significant challenge towards achieving food sovereignty and the human right to adequate food and nutrition.



Photo: Travel Aficionado. Woman sells fish at a fish market in Mindelo, Cabo Verde, 2013 <<http://goo.gl/PN6R9E>>.

the terms of the agreements should be better capitalised and negotiated. The compensation arrangements of these agreements should be examined to consider the long-term needs and the sustainable development of Cabo Verde. ●

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1. Joint Office of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF Cabo Verde. Cabo Verde became the first pilot Joint Office (JO) of the Ex-Com agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP) on 1 January 2006. This was a major step in the UN’s reform to harmonise and simplify its activities in small countries. The JO model consists of a single UN office for the participating agencies, led by one representative who equally

represents all the participating agencies and is also the UN Resident Coordinator. The JO has one organisational structure and a single programme (the Common Country Programme—CCPD) encompassing the activities and mandates of the three participating agencies (UNDP, UNFP and UNICEF), and uses one set of business processes, rules and regulations under a ‘support agency’ arrangement.

2. The Cabo Verde diaspora has been an important source of remittance inflows since the country’s independence. It is estimated that 1 million Cabo Verdeans live abroad. Remittances constitute one of the three largest sources of external financing for the economy, even though their overall share in the economy has been declining over the last decade.

3. The category of LDC was established in 1964 during the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). With this category, UNCTAD intended to present a new way to target interventions for developing countries. Three criteria are used by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) to determine LDC status: i) per capita income (gross national income per capita); ii) human assets (indicators of nutrition, health, school enrolment and literacy); and iii) economic vulnerability (indicators of natural and trade-related shocks, physical and economic exposure to shocks, and size and remoteness). Only four countries have so far graduated from a previous LDC status: Botswana in 1994, Cabo Verde in 2007, the Maldives in 2011, and Samoa in January 2014. Cabo Verde was able to satisfy only two of the three criteria—gross per capita income and human capital.

4. Bottom feeders.
5. The Cotonou Agreement is a framework for EU cooperation with 79 countries from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP). The ACP–EU Partnership Agreement, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000, was concluded for a period of 20 years (2000 to 2020). It is the most comprehensive partnership agreement between developing countries and the EU. Its fundamental principles include the equality of partners, global participation (States and non-state actors), dialogue and regionalisation.
6. Note that the agreement is negotiated separately with each country.

The impacts of mega development projects on the food and nutrition security of traditional communities in Portuguese-speaking countries

by Joana Filipa Dias Vilão da Rocha Dias¹

Family farmers’ rights, food security and nutrition in Portuguese-speaking countries

The Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (*Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa*—CPLP) represents almost 250 million people, from countries spanning four different continents: Africa (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea-Equatorial, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe), the Americas (Brazil), Europe (Portugal) and Asia (East-Timor).

According to data published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO 2015), Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1² has been achieved in several CPLP countries (such as Brazil, Angola, São Tomé and Príncipe) and may be reached by some of the others before 2020.³ Although recent national and regional efforts to guarantee food security and nutrition in the community, and the apparent reduction in the number of undernourished people (from 38 million at the beginning of the 1990s to under 23 million today), the levels of poverty and food insecurity remain alarmingly high in most CPLP countries.

According to recent World Development Indicators, more than 45 per cent of the population of Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and East-Timor live below the poverty line (World Bank 2016).⁴ These levels of poverty are accompanied by shocking levels of stunting for children under the age of five—more than 25 per cent in several countries, such as in Angola, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Guinea-Bissau (UNICEF 2015).⁵

This percentage reaches almost 58 per cent in East-Timor and exceeds 43 per cent in Mozambique (ibid.). In São Tomé and Príncipe, while the proportion of undernourished people has decreased significantly, from

22.9 per cent in 1990–1992 to 6.8 per cent in 2012–2014 (FAO 2015), and although the country received recognition from the United Nations for achieving MDG1 in 2015, one in eight children dies before the age of five (WFP 2015). According to a recently launched report by UNICEF (2016), Angola is the country with the highest under-five mortality rates. Among the Portuguese-speaking countries, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique also figure in the top 25 positions on this list (13th and 23rd, respectively).

Although most of the food worldwide is produced by family farming, the majority of the food-insecure population also live in rural areas (Patriota et al. 2015).

In Portuguese-speaking countries, members of the Civil Society Regional Network for Food and Nutrition Security (REDSAN–CPLP) corroborate this paradoxical correlation: although peasants and family farmers are among the major victims of food insecurity and poverty in the CPLP region, this category is responsible for producing over 70 per cent of the food in most countries of the region, directly or indirectly feeding more than 45 million people (REDSAN–CPLP 2015): in Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa, such as Angola, family farmers make up more than 80 per cent of the farming sector.

In Mozambique, for example, family farms account for almost 96 per cent of the cultivated land (IIED 2015). Despite the participation of family farmers and small producers in the food production of these countries, the area effectively owned by them is small, particularly in African Portuguese-speaking countries (around 8 per cent of the total territory in Mozambique, 6 per cent in Cape Verde, and 16 per cent in Guinea-Bissau), illustrating the high levels of land concentration that still persist in these countries (Sarmento 2013).

Implementation of mega development projects in Portuguese-speaking countries may threaten the rights of family farmers

The right of peasants to have access to and control over land and other natural resources in Portuguese-speaking countries is often threatened by the implementation of mega development projects. A widely known example is ProSAVANA,⁶ a governmental joint initiative between Mozambique, Brazil and Japan, launched in 2009 which undertakes technical cooperation projects for agricultural development of the Nacala Corridor in northern Mozambique. Mozambican civil society (including the National Peasants’ Union—UNAC—and the Mozambican Network for Food Sovereignty—ROSA—members of the CPLP Peasants Platform and REDSAN–CPLP) has been drawing attention to the negative impacts of this initiative on peasants’ rights of access and control over land, which are threatened by involuntary resettlement and expropriation to make room for monoculture (ORAM 2012). These enormous initiatives and investments may have serious implications for national legal and institutional frameworks.

Although Mozambican Land Law 19/1997 establishes the rights of communities to land (articles 1, 12 and 14) and underlines that land cannot be sold (article 3),⁷ the interests and rights of peasants are particularly vulnerable, since, for example, more than 60 per cent of the land area in Nampula province that will be affected by the ProSAVANA programme is not officially registered through title deeds (ibid.). In practice, the application of the law remains ineffective, resulting in conflicts over land usually involving portentous private investors against fragile local communities. Also, legislation on access to water, seeds and the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) may also be revised,

“Strengthening governance is a crucial step towards promoting greater involvement of peasants and traditional communities in demanding specific policies that ensure the full exercise of their rights.



Photo: Family farm in Comporta, Portugal, 2011 <<http://goo.gl/ohhEq4>>.

with the intention of facilitating the entry of multinational companies into the sector.

The introduction of massive private investments into a territory where most of the land is public and where few communities have recorded documentation (such as title deeds), all within a context of land being offered to investors via a concession regime costing very little for decades, presents, as Schlesinger (2013) underlines, real risks to the peasants.

Institutional recognition of the role of family farmers as food suppliers and guardian of bio- and social diversity in the CPLP

The potential impacts of international investments on the legal and institutional frameworks of CPLP countries must be highlighted, particularly in light of the trend in African Portuguese-speaking countries to expand the agribusiness model, which makes intensive use of means of production and is based on working large tracts of land. For this reason, the institutional recognition of family farmers and improving their access to natural resources, credit and social technologies is crucial.

In this sense, the civil society mechanism in the Regional Council for Food Security and Nutrition of the CPLP (CONSAN-CPLP) is actively participating in the discussion of possible regional guidelines to promote family farming among Portuguese-speaking States. These guidelines must recognise the crucial role of peasants

and traditional communities as a primary supplier of food production and their irreplaceable role in the “sustainable management and use of natural resources and related traditional knowledge, protecting the rural landscape and the natural and cultural heritage of local communities” (ACTUAR 2014, 10).

This approach is diametrically opposed to the inherent perspectives of mega projects and investments such as ProSAVANA, which consider environmental issues from a merely conservationist point of view. Although perfunctorily listing the conservation units and other areas protected by law, ProSAVANA makes no mention of the impacts of deforestation on the formation of cultivation areas, or the reduction in the availability of water, and does not guarantee a participatory and transparent process of policy negotiation and formulation. Traditional communities, along with their knowledge and practices, are thus neglected, and their rights and voices are ignored.

These threats are worrisome in CPLP countries with recognised bio- and social diversity, where the indispensable role of family farmers and traditional communities in the sustainable management of natural resources (including, land, water, biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge) is particularly visible.

The rainforest in Príncipe Island (São Tomé and Príncipe), for example, classified by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)⁸

as being among the 100 most important areas for biodiversity in the world, was named a UN Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) in 2013.

An ambitious sustainable development project is currently being developed on the island, seeking to integrate environmental conservation and biodiversity with other economic activities. The vast biological and cultural diversity of São Tomé and Príncipe is reflected in the undeniable potential of the country as a sustainable tourist destination and a possible source of relevant raw materials for biotechnological innovation, as the biogenetic resources and traditional knowledge held by local populations are strategic inputs.⁹ Private investment projects in the country¹⁰ must not threaten the opportunities for São Toméan communities and peasants to take advantage of the ecological potential and existing biodiversity to achieve sustainable development. Thus, initiatives undertaken by the private sector in these areas must be accompanied by the development of a regulatory and legislative framework, with active civil society participation (Dias 2015a).¹¹

Despite the relevance of international instruments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and respective protocols, including the 2012 Nagoya Protocol for Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (CBD 2012), pushing for prior informed

consent and benefit-sharing, these tools cannot be regarded as a substitute for national access and benefit-sharing mechanisms (Dias 2015b). To ensure the necessary coordination of efforts across different levels, closer cooperation among Portuguese-speaking countries, preferably with official endorsement from the CPLP, could contribute to strengthen the protection and promotion of traditional knowledge associated with biodiversity, since most of the Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa still do not possess adequate institutional and legal response mechanisms.¹²

Relevant experiences from across the CPLP may serve as a source of institutional knowledge and good practices to inform stronger collaboration among countries,¹³ illustrating the challenges and opportunities of giving social diversity a central position, taking into account traditional customs and contributing to ensure food sovereignty among Portuguese-speaking communities.

Final remarks

About 70 per cent of so-called developing countries depend directly on biodiversity for their survival and well-being (European Parliament 2013), a figure that reaches 80 per cent regarding the use of traditional natural medicines (CDB 2010). Since mega development projects in Portuguese-speaking countries do not seem to recognise the relevance of these data and insist on neglecting the multifunctional role(s) of peasant family farmers, it is becoming imperative for

development partners, policymakers and international organisations to recognise the rights to adequate food, health and education as inseparable from the rights of peasants and interconnected traditional communities; the enforcement of these rights should, therefore, involve the active participation and full coordination of all relevant actors.

The formulation and implementation of public policies in the field of food and nutrition security under the framework of the human right to adequate food and nutrition in CPLP countries has been increasingly accompanied by greater interaction between governments and civil society. To a large extent, the strengthening of relevant thematic networks of civil society in these countries has contributed to advance appropriate policies. At the regional level, CONSAN-CPLP¹⁴ is contributing to strengthen the dynamics and participation of civil society within the CPLP.

Strengthening governance is a crucial step towards promoting greater involvement of peasants and traditional communities in demanding specific policies that ensure the full exercise of their rights. To this end, and since the CPLP Regional Strategy for Food and Nutrition Security (ESAN-CPLP) recognises the vital importance of the access to and control over natural resources in effectively promoting family farming, it would be interesting to create a working group on biodiversity and natural resources under the scope of CONSAN-

CPLP, to ensure that institutional responses are created and endorsed by the CPLP, avoiding the ‘privatisation of biodiversity’ and facilitating the development of benefit-sharing instruments among traditional communities. ●

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Photo: ILO. Farmer demonstrates organic seedlings grown in greenhouse, ready to be transplanted and sold, East Timor, 2012 <<http://goo.gl/zoJt6p>>.

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1. ACTUAR Association for Cooperation and Development. Joana Rocha Dias is the coordinator of the CPLP Regional Network for Food and Nutrition Security (REDSAN-CPLP), has a Master's degree in Development, Agriculture and Society (Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) and a PhD in Knowledge and Innovation (University of Coimbra, Portugal).

2. MDG 1c: "Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger" (United Nations 2000).

3. These data, however, should be interpreted with some caution, given the weaknesses of the national statistical systems in most African countries. Also, the methodology used in the FAO report is being criticised by many civil society actors: its limitations are illustrated by the case of Brazil, which achieved the historic feat of reducing the prevalence of undernourishment to under 5 per cent; this fact renders the number of undernourished people of no statistical significance, according to the methodology used by the FAO in preparing the report; however, a survey carried out by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística*—IBGE) shows that the prevalence of malnutrition is still 3.2 per cent (2013 data), which is to



Photo: Peter Fredenburg. Ploughing land in Tete, Mozambique, 2008 <<http://goo.gl/X8ndWj>>.

say that about 7.2 million Brazilians are in a situation of malnutrition.

4. Refers to poverty headcount ratio at USD1.90 a day (2011 purchasing power parity—PPP) (percentage of population). Date of reference: Guinea-Bissau 2010, Mozambique 2008 and East-Timor 2007. See World Bank (2016).

5. Refers to moderate and severe stunting: percentage of children aged 0–59 months who are below minus two standard deviations from the median height-for-age of the World Health Organization Child Growth Standards. See UNICEF (2015) for recent data.

6. ProSAVANA refers to a programme for agricultural development of the African tropical savannah in Mozambique, focusing on 14 districts in the provinces of Niassa, Nampula and Zambezia, an area of roughly 14 million hectares along the Nacala Corridor. It is run under a cooperation agreement between the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) and the Mozambican Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG). This triangular cooperation programme aims to improve the competitiveness of the rural sector in the region through technical support to agribusiness-oriented agriculture. Technical expertise and input are provided by Brazil (EMBRAPA is the leading Brazilian technical institution), in cooperation with MINAG and the Mozambican agrarian research institute, IIAM.

7. According to Mozambican Land Law 19/1997, land belongs to the State (article 3), and the right to use and benefit from the land operates under a concession regime for 50 years, renewable for another 50 (article 17) (Government of Mozambique 1997).

8. WWF originally stood for 'World Wildlife Fund'. However, in 1986 the organisation changed its name to 'World Wide Fund For Nature'. The USA and Canada retained the old name. See <<http://wwf.panda.org/>>.

9. Plants with medicinal value in the country (and associated traditional knowledge held by traditional doctors and healers), for example,

are being identified and analysed by Maria do Céu Madureira (2008), PhD in Pharmacognosy and Phytochemistry.

10. Examples of such investment projects include Agripalma's investment in palm oil production and ecotourism projects implemented by HBD for high-income segments, mainly on the Island of Príncipe.

11. In São Tomé and Príncipe, efforts are being made in this sense, including through a European Commission project (FOR.BIO.STP), which seeks precisely the adaptation and reinforcement of the national legal and institutional frameworks to promote biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge. ACTUAR, ADAPPA (a member of the Santomean Network for Food Security and Nutrition—RESCAN-STP) and OIKOS comprise the consortium that is implementing this project.

12. Adequate institutional and legal mechanisms must include the national ratification of international protocols and specific regulation concerning prior informed consent; access and benefit-sharing mechanisms, particularly for traditional communities; and a solid interministerial institutional framework to ensure compliance with norms and regulations.

13. Such as the well-known long negotiation process in Brazil to develop legal and institutional protection for traditional knowledge associated with biodiversity; or local experiences, such as the one in the Uruk Islands—a World Biosphere Reserve in the archipelago of Bijagos, Guinea-Bissau—through the creation of a community-based marine protected area, based on a participatory governance process, with significant involvement of local communities. Tiniguena, a Guinean non-governmental organisation and member of the Civil Society Network for Food and Nutrition Security and Sovereignty (RESSAN-GB), has been playing a notable role in this process of participatory construction.

14. The civil society mechanism in CONSAN-CPLP is currently facilitated by ACTUAR.

Seed sovereignty, nutrition and agricultural diversity in Africa: key issues and challenges

by Mariam Mayet¹

Farmer-managed seed systems vs. the 'informal' seed system narrative

Seeds have been at the very core of human society throughout history. They are at the heart of healthy food systems and form the basis of the food we consume. In sub-Saharan Africa, the majority of seeds planted by small-scale farmers are selected and saved from the previous harvest, or sourced from neighbouring farmers and local rural trade (McGuire and Sperling 2016). The importance of the farmer-managed seed systems (FMSS), which are central to conserving biodiversity, ensuring nutritional diversity and supporting livelihoods, has been highlighted in a vast literature (e.g. Jarvis et al. 2011; Vernooy et al. 2015). A key priority for smallholder farmers in Africa is resilience in the face of harsh weather events. This requires seed variety adaptation and greater agricultural diversity, which allow for the spreading of risk. At the same time, farmers prioritise local nutrition security; for them, the loss of agricultural biodiversity means the loss of nutritional diversity.

Nevertheless, the existing literature refers to these systems as being 'informal', as opposed to 'formal' seed systems in which seed breeding, production and marketing are highly regulated. Informality is used by Green Revolution² proponents, including African governments, to imply something that is sub-standard and that must be ignored, radically overhauled or eradicated altogether. It also suggests an absence of, or a diminished role for, social rules and norms that govern such systems (Coomes et al. 2015). Indeed, a vast range of initiatives aim to increase the productivity levels of subsistence and small-scale farmers in Africa, shaped by the Green Revolution ideology. This promotes the intensive use of improved hybrid seeds and synthetic fertilisers to increase yields (ACB 2015a), and focuses on increasing calorific, as opposed to nutritional, intake (IPES 2015). These interventions, such as the Alliance for a Green Revolution in

Africa (AGRA), the G8 New Alliance on Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN), Grow Africa and many others, place a heavy emphasis on developing and facilitating the role of the private sector in Africa's seed systems—and totally ignore FMSS.

Green (Agricultural) Revolution agenda

The discourse at the highest levels of global policymaking for agriculture is dominated by agribusiness and hundreds of academics and non-governmental think tanks, as reflected in the NAFSN, which is one of many key drivers for transformation of the seed sectors in various African countries, including Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and other alliance partner countries in West Africa. The Green Revolution agenda holds great sway in African agricultural policy, programming and investment. This is evident from the African Union's Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) down to national governments and their programmes, and wherever public-private partnerships are the preferred vehicle for agricultural development (ACB 2015a).

There is a strong push to secure private commercial interests in agricultural input supply, especially seeds, a fact that is especially evident in national and regional plant variety protection (PVP), plant breeder's rights and seed certification laws and regulations. These are asserting exclusive rights of ownership and control, with punitive consequences for smallholder farmers for not obeying. The African Regional Intellectual Property Organization's (ARIPO) draconian PVP regulations³ are a strong case in point and represent a ferocious campaign against seed-saving farmers in Africa and state sovereignty (AFSA 2016).

Farm input subsidy programmes: undermining seed and nutritional diversity

Farm input subsidy programmes (FISPs) play a central role in the financing and delivery of Green Revolution technologies; in many countries in Southern and Eastern Africa they are the centrepieces

of agricultural budgets. FISPs are public-sector subsidies for the provision of largely standardised input packages consisting of commercial seed—mainly hybrid maize—and synthetic fertilisers. The inputs are produced by large multinational and a few large domestic corporations, which are the primary beneficiaries of FISPs (ACB 2016a). Across the continent, the maize seed market is worth USD500 million (ACB 2015b). To date, 10 African governments have spent more than USD1 billion—close to 30 per cent of their agricultural budgets—on large-scale FISPs since 2000 (ACB 2016a).

The obsession with maize in subsidy programmes is linked to the erosion of seed and crop diversity, which seriously compromises nutritional diversity. In Malawi, up to 45 per cent of cultivated land is dedicated to growing improved hybrid maize seed, while less land is dedicated to traditional maize and other local varieties. This contradicts the country's own agricultural policy, which specifically promotes diversification (Ricker-Gilbert, Jayne and Shively 2013).

In Lesotho, this maize fixation has led to the country using its scarce public resources to plant maize, despite it being more feasible, given the country's soil and climatic conditions, to diversify its agricultural production and include sorghum and wheat, for example (ACB 2016a). Focusing on maize instead of diversity—including drought-tolerant crops such as cassava and sweet potato—leaves farmers vulnerable in the face of shocks such as drought, pests, diseases and markets (Ricker-Gilbert, Jayne and Shively 2013). It also entrenches the need for escalated fertility management or the enhanced use of fertilisers, because maize has one of the largest nutrient removal footprints of all crops (ACB 2015a).

Biofortification and genetic engineering

The genetic engineering (GE) industry is extending its reach in Africa over traditional subsistence crops such as cassava, sorghum, sweet potato, pigeon

“Farmers prioritise local nutrition security; for them, the loss of agricultural biodiversity means the loss of nutritional diversity.”



Photo: Daniella Van Leggelo-Padilla / World Bank. Men stocking up on new seeds, Kaolack, Senegal, 2014 <<http://goo.gl/MIA5qg>>.

pea and millet, as well as rice (ACB 2016b). There is a strong focus on biofortification through GE, which involves traits meant to ‘benefit’ farmers and malnourished populations. This is remarkable, given the need to move away from an excessive emphasis on temporary food fortification strategies, including biofortification, towards a more permanent solution—i.e. diet diversification through locally available foods, which was recognised as early as 1992 by the United Nations International Conference on Nutrition.

Crucially, these GE projects divert financial and human resources, policies and practices away from actual long-term solutions that can be found within the diversity of natural foods and

farming. GE crops will not address these multiple nutritional challenges faced by poor people who live in degraded environments and suffer from various nutritional deficiencies. Sustainable solutions must be found that will move farmers closer to achieving food sovereignty, which, in turn, will increase their access to healthy and varied diets that will address a range of vitamin and nutrient deficiencies. Agro-ecology and home gardens, in particular, are successful strategies to combat micronutrient deficiencies in developing countries (Lopez Villar 2015). These are also viable strategies for addressing biotic and abiotic (i.e. the living and non-living components, respectively, of an ecosystem) stresses and challenges.

Going forward: farmer-managed seed systems—an integral part of complex food systems

Key strategies among civil society groups in Africa are increasingly being oriented towards supporting agro-ecological farming systems that integrate, strengthen and validate FMSS. For agro-ecological farming systems to flourish, a wide diversity of seed/planting materials is needed for breeding, production, exchange, cultivation and further adaptation. This integration is fundamental to the livelihoods and nutrition of African families, as well as in the national, regional and international policy spaces. Our central recommendation is thus for policy and institutional support for agro-ecological farming systems, with FMSS at their core.

“Africa must shift towards developing and implementing key strategies for food and dietary diversification at the community and household levels.”



Photo: Dominic Chavez/World Bank. Farmers working in their fields in preparation to plant maize in Gnoungouya Village, Guinea, 2015 <<http://goo.gl/Tnj8uh>>.

The mono-focus on maize, especially in subsidy programmes, accompanied by the use of synthetic fertilisers is detrimental to soil health, which is already declining. It diminishes agrobiodiversity and leads to decreasing levels of dietary diversity, which has implications for human health (ACB 2016a). There are alternative ways to implement subsidy programmes, and Mauritius provides an inspiring example in this regard. Mauritius uses subsidies to help small-scale farmers (by reducing input costs) and increase productivity (through improved soil health). It has linked a compost subsidy into longer-term sustainable development goals, by attempting to mitigate the damage caused by the large-scale and historical application of chemical fertilisers, and to shift farmers towards more ecologically sound production methods. The compost subsidy scheme also fits within a broader attempt to solve environmental problems, such as reducing the amount of organic waste that ends up in landfill (ibid.).

Africa must shift towards developing and implementing key strategies for food and dietary diversification at the community and household levels. This shift must include: the promotion of traditional foods and home gardens and the raising of small livestock; improved preservation processes and storage facilities for fruits and vegetables, to reduce waste, post-harvest losses and effects of seasonality; the strengthening of small-scale agro-processing and food industries; and education to encourage the consumption of a healthy and nutritious diet (FAO 1997; Lopez Villar 2015). Africa must shift its agriculture paradigm to agro-ecology, which can provide enough food for all in a sustainable manner (De Schutter 2010; 2014) by building on traditional agriculture, which is extremely rich in eco biodiversity.

Following a 2009 study by the International Assessment on Agricultural Science and Technology Development (IAASTD 2009), there is growing global interest in agro-ecological practices that offer ways forward in regenerating biodiversity, absorbing excess carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere, improving soil fertility and water retention capacity, and contributing to healthier and more diverse diets.

Trends that favour agro-ecology as part of the solution have also influenced the discussion on seeds, which is beginning to embrace alternatives to the standardised Green Revolution package. There is widespread recognition that farmers—women farmers in particular—reproduce most seed varieties, even if these are not on an equal footing (in terms of a formal market value) with maize. These women will need to play an active role in shaping and implementing activities to widen the diversity of crops and seed varieties, and to protect and grow FMSS.

There is growing interest in securing farmers’ rights, together with FMSS, as a component of the agenda for agro-ecology and diversity, within a broader understanding of food systems as fundamentally complex systems. The International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES 2015) notes that issues of hunger, malnutrition, biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, cultural erosion and social conflict cannot be viewed or treated in isolation. ●

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1. Executive Director and founder of the African Centre for Biodiversity (ACB).
2. The Green Revolution refers to the development of high-yielding seed varieties, also referred to as ‘improved varieties’, bred for a strong yield response to inorganic fertilisers and other chemical inputs. These varieties are part of a technological package, consisting of inorganic fertilisers, pesticides and other chemical inputs, financing and securing output markets etc.
3. Draft regulations circulated by ARIPO in early July 2016 were designed to intimidate and force seed processors, seed suppliers, government certification officers and even farmers’ organisations to police and spy on farmers who use farm-saved protected seed.

Social engagement in food and nutrition sovereignty and security: Brazilian cooperation in Africa

by Renato S. Maluf¹ and Veruska Prado Alexandre²

This article aims to address the social engagements of Brazilian cooperation on food and nutrition sovereignty and security (FNSS) and the human right to food (HRF) in Africa. It opens with a historical analysis of Brazilian technical and humanitarian cooperation, making use of the concepts of FNSS and HRF as enshrined in the Organic Law of Food and Nutrition Security (LOSAN 2006) and followed by the National Plans for Food and Nutrition Security (PLANSAN).³ In addition to drawing on specialised literature, the article also considers the outcomes of workshops with national actors, including members of the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (*Conselho Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional*—CONSEA), and the findings of four case studies in African countries by members of local civil society organisations.⁴

Brazilian South–South cooperation in food and nutrition security

The position of Brazil as an international actor changed significantly between 2003 and 2014, in particular by the country presenting itself more as a donor than as a beneficiary of cooperation for development. This change occurred in the context of a new global geopolitical scenario arising from the emerging powers of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and their increasing involvement in South–South cooperation for development. This does not mean that initiatives among these actors were entirely comparable (Leite et al. 2013; 2014), although the pursuit of joint initiatives by members of the group was possible. Neither does it mean a consensus around concepts (Milani et al. 2013).

There are a multitude of initiatives that could be understood as both opportunities to create holistic views and coordinated actions, and the ‘exporting’ of contradictory development models. Nonetheless, Leite et al. (2014) point out the parallel between

‘exporting’ contradictory models and Brazil’s notoriety for internally combining democracy, economic development and social inclusion. Therefore, the uniqueness of the Brazilian South–South cooperation model is questionable. For Milani et al. (2013), its defining feature is the absence of an institutionalised regime. For Cabral and Shankland (2013), what emerges is cooperation shaped by agendas, experiences and even the imagination of the institutions and individuals involved.

Alongside domestic factors, trends and disputes in the international arena also help determine the pathways for South–South cooperation. Cabral (2013) states that in addition to the already mentioned role of BRICS, there has been a rapid growth of private philanthropy, which has in turn become a profitable industry in and of itself in terms of economic opportunities, as well as a strengthening of bilateral and ‘minilateral’⁵ initiatives resulting from the incapacity to modify multilateral governance to suit the individual needs of each country.

Depending on the prevalence of the aforementioned factors, these scenarios can achieve either greater collaboration among emerging powers and public mediation or the expansion of private investments that could lead to an amplification and resonance of the economic interests of the elite and to the re-conceptualisation of the term ‘cooperation’ itself (Cabral 2013). Public opinion in donor countries also plays an important role. Each of these scenarios has specific implications. Nonetheless, Brazil’s position as one of the vertices of triangular operations with Southern countries until recently should not be underestimated, nor should the trends of the country’s own agenda in the field of FNSS.

Disputes over cooperation approaches regarding how to best tackle poverty and hunger are particularly relevant, especially with the present focus on

activities targeting the development of markets and the strengthening of the private sector, with an emphasis on small entrepreneurs (Cabral 2013). At least two manifestations are visible in the field of FNSS and HRF. First, the strengthening of productivist concepts of agriculture in Africa and the related environmental and cultural impacts of models such as the one led by commercial farmers and large agribusiness in Brazil, which are claimed to be the appropriate response for the need to expand the food production capacities of African countries. Second, the recent international notoriety afforded to nutrition has given way to initiatives mostly conducted by private organisations.

As for the question of including devices of participatory democracy in cooperation projects, this depends not only on a decision from the Brazilian cooperation side but also on its acceptance by recipient countries. Assuming that such limits are difficult to determine, evaluations of the international diffusion of the Food Acquisition Programme (*Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos*—PAA)⁶ and the National School Feeding Programme (*Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar*—PNAE)⁷ point out gaps in the relationship with civil society organisations (CSOs) of recipient countries. Promoting exchange initiatives among CSOs from both sides could be an important mechanism to overcome this gap.

Finally, it is mandatory to consider the dramatic changes that are under way in Brazil due to the deepening of the crisis since 2014, and the possibility of interrupting President Dilma Rousseff’s mandate from 2016 onwards. This will add a significant reorientation of public policies (for instance, redirecting foreign policies towards the North while reducing South–South cooperation) to the social impacts of the economic crises already noticeable. In any case, it is worth mentioning the limited commitment of the Rousseff government



Photo: Ubirajara Machado/MDS. Incentive programmes change the lives of smallholder farmers, Ceará, Brazil, 2015 <<http://goo.gl/QBylq7>>.

to the international development agenda and the interruption of strategies towards smaller countries (Cabral 2013). This could become worse if the country’s historical importance is relegated to a secondary position in the face of Northern countries.

Brazil’s relationship with Africa

Cooperation with African countries has figured prominently on the Brazilian agenda of cooperation in FNSS until recently. When examined from a longer-term perspective, the South–South cooperation policy promoted by the Lula administration initiated the ‘third wave’ of relations between Brazil and Africa (Castro 2014). This ‘third wave’ was characterised by an increase in resources and political efforts devoted to the cause, increasing technical cooperation, the importance of the role of the private sector supported by the Brazilian Development Bank (*Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social*—BNDES) and diversification beyond the members of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP). There has been an increase in the number of Brazilian embassies in African countries, together with the intensification of investment and trade.

All this strengthened the role of Brazil in multilateral spaces, without abandoning the relationship with Northern countries. In fact, a differential aspect of this relationship is the extension of the partnership with those countries acting to reform international institutions and negotiations in the World Trade Organization (Oloruntoba

2014). However, it should be noted that international cooperation lost ground at the end of President Rousseff’s administration and is facing the very real risk of being interrupted.

Analysing Brazilian cooperation implies considering not only interests involved in foreign or trade policies but also the co-existence of concepts and practices that are at times conflicting. There are initiatives derived from preferential public agendas, such as the Zero Hunger (*Fome Zero*) programme,⁸ or from private-sector interests, such as Brazilian agribusiness support to the Programme of Triangular Cooperation for Developing Agriculture in the Tropical Savannahs of Mozambique (ProSavana). There are also those related to guidelines of international organisations, such as local food purchases for school meals by the World Food Programme.

In addition, it should be noted that Brazilian South–South cooperation rarely involves experts or representatives of CSOs, lacks accountability mechanisms and is very receptive to private interests (Pinho 2013; Beghin 2014a). Nonetheless, Brazil’s contributions to strengthening democratic institutions in sub-Saharan Africa and the inclusion of their populations in ‘domestic consumer markets’ are recognised by most social actors engaged in cooperation initiatives.

Challenges to the social construction of the international agenda for FNSS
Four proposals for the social construction

“Cooperation with African countries has figured prominently on the Brazilian agenda of cooperation in FNSS [food and nutrition sovereignty and security] until recently.”

of an international agenda for FNSS and HRF emerged from debates between Brazilian CSOs and government representatives under CONSEA:

- 1. Agreement to a concept of South–South Cooperation in FNSS.**
A common agenda in international cooperation for development requires conformity to the concept of cooperation to substantiate the implementation of a flexible and empowered institutional structure, also encompassing mechanisms for social participation, transparency and accountability (Beghin 2014b). This effort should consider the trends and disputes in international agendas and the complexity of the actors and interests involved.
- 2. Construction of spaces for coordinating and managing demands for South–South cooperation**
The Brazilian CSO proposal of a national council for foreign policy, allowing for coordination with social participation, would help to deal with initiatives that promote different and even opposing models of development, notably in agriculture and rural areas. These initiatives reproduce national dilemmas and international disputes brought about by the entry of new actors onto the international cooperation stage. As for the government sectors dedicated to cooperation on FNSS, a connection with the Inter-Ministerial Chamber for FNS in recommended.

3. **Give transparency to Brazilian South–South cooperation in FNSS**
Brazilian South–South cooperation does not have any formal mechanism for social participation in any of the design, implementation, monitoring or evaluation stages, as would be possible under the proposed national foreign policy council (Ibid.). Efforts such as the joint action between CONSEA and the National Council for Sustainable Rural Development are also worth mentioning.

Beghin (2014b) noted that issues related to official South–South cooperation are not fully understood by representatives of CSOs and social movements, whose agendas are used to equating South–South cooperation with the internationalisation of the Zero Hunger programme and the idea of ‘exporting contradictions’. She suggests expanding the debate on South–South cooperation with CSOs and promoting studies on the subjects of transparency and participation in recipient countries.

4. **Promote social participation in public policies**

The establishment of a cooperation policy that promotes participation in recipient countries leads to the recognition of participatory democracy with a joint construction between government and society. If this is not considered, cooperation activities misrepresent the Brazilian experience, which is presented in an incomplete format. To overcome this situation, it would be a significant advantage to establish a direct channel for exchange with CSOs in these countries, in addition to the adoption of social participation as a basic principle of Brazilian cooperation in FNSS.

Social participation can certainly adopt various strategies in formal and informal spaces. Furthermore, there are distinct understandings of the concept of civil society and differing degrees of openness of national governments to this participation. This implies taking the Brazilian experience, not as a model to be

transplanted directly, but as a frame of reference for building and strengthening capacities according to the realities and contexts of recipient countries. ●

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2. Federal University of Goiás and CERESAN, UFRRJ.

3. The law and the plans were both outcomes of joint constructions by government and civil society representatives in CONSEA. PLANSA I referred to 2012–2015, and PLANSA II to 2016–2019. See <<http://www4.planalto.gov.br/consea>>.

4. The project analysed the international role of Brazil in the fields of FNSS and HRF, with the support of Oxfam International. See also Maluf and Santarelli (2015).

5. Minilateralism is a form of multilateralism consisting in grouping countries and organisations for dealing with specific topics or issues. Patrick (2014) called the recent move towards disaggregating global issues into manageable chunks “governance in pieces”.

6. The PAA was established by the federal government in 2003. It is considered an example of virtuous articulation between agricultural policy and the food and nutrition perspectives. The government buys food directly from small-holder family farmers or their organisations, in a decentralised manner, and distributes it through social organisations to those in food insecurity or uses it to build strategic public stocks.

7. The PNAE was originally launched in 1954. It has undergone changes in its design, with the aim of strengthening its strategic role in promoting FNS. In 2009 a new law established a set of new regulations in the programme design, among them the mandatory allocation of at least 30 per cent of the funds transferred by the federal government to states and municipalities to purchase foods directly from family farmers or their organisations.

8. The programme was launched in 2003, as an outcome of then President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva’s decision to prioritise the agenda of overcoming hunger and tackle it as a political problem, rather than a technical one. A host of programmes were put in place under a participatory framework. In 2014 Brazil exited the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Hunger Map for the first time.

A look at agroecology and popular cooperation in Mozambican savannahs¹

by Marcelo Rodrigues Mendonça,² Adriano Rodrigues de Oliveira² and Ricardo Junior de Assis Fernandes Gonçalves³

This article was developed by a multidisciplinary team of researchers from the Federal University of Goiás (UFG), the Goiás State University (UEG) and the Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM), with the aim of proposing strategies that encourage the production of food through agroecological management in territories studied in Brazil and Mozambique. To this end, we consider the activities, practices and *savoir-faire* of working with the land, water and seeds accumulated by peasants in the state of Goiás in Brazil and the Inhambane province in Mozambique.

Our reflections and the results of our research reference the principles of agroecology and the creative economy. One of the defining features of creative economy is the ability for individuals to act collectively to integrate research experiences, extension activities and popular cooperation.

As a result of empowering peasants in community life, it creates concrete possibilities for the production of healthy food, while strengthening commercialisation spaces such as farmers’

and institutional markets, resulting in an improved quality of life in both the countryside and cities.

Agroecology is guided by the exploration of the integration between the social production of life and work, and the natural resources that enable it. It is practised in different settings, such as within peasant communities,⁴ settlements and encampments of rural landless workers in Brazil, grounded on the rhythms and balances of the natural environment and the knowledge of peasants themselves. According to Mendonça (2010), agroecology is a way to understand and mobilise to ‘peasantify’ agriculture, ranching, forestry and agroextractivism through an intergenerational consciousness. To achieve this, there needs to be respect for the knowledge derived from everyday experiences and the *savoir-faire* of a symbiotic relationship with nature.

In this regard, we highlight the experiences of researchers and students from the Research Laboratory for Territorial Dynamics and Studies (LABOTER) of the Institute of Socio-Environmental Studies (IESA) at the Federal University of Goiás in Brazil, featuring research and extension activities with traditional peasant

populations, *quilombolas*⁵ and agrarian reform settlements. These activities mainly focus on *criollo* seeds, agroecological backyards and public policies, such as the Food Acquisition Programme (*Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos*—PAA) and the National School Feeding Programme (*Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar*—PNAE), in central Brazil. Based on the Brazilian experience, popular cooperation and research conducted in Mozambique seeks to contribute to the construction of agroecological food systems and commercialisation pathways based on short, fair and sustainable circuits.

A few insights from the research in Mozambique

According to the Mozambican National Statistics Institute (2015), of the total 25,727,911 people in Mozambique, 8,181,475 reside in urban areas, while 17,546,436 reside in rural areas. This information, among other factors, is illustrative of the importance of considering elements of the Mozambican agrarian question (such as the production, commercialisation and consumption of food) in any research that pertains to the country and its territories. In addition, it draws attention to environmental conflicts arising from policies that favour the appropriation of territories by mega-projects

“ In the Inhambane city streets, it is common to see informal food markets that offer lettuce, cassava, beans and other produce grown in the surrounding rural areas.



Photo: Gonçalves (UEG). Bean seeds sold on the streets of the city of Inhambane, fieldwork, Mozambique, 2014.

(Castel-Branco 2010) such as agribusiness (Tripartite Cooperation Programme for the Agricultural Development of the Tropical Savannah in Mozambique—ProSAVANA) and mining, illustrated by the coal mining in the Tete province by Vale S.A.

Food production is a challenge for the economy, the government and the Mozambican peasants themselves, given that the country has always imported food, with the period of the civil war (1976–1992) marked as its most devastating phase. As de Brito et al. (2015, 11) emphasise, in 1975, the year of independence, 49 per cent of cereals were supplied via domestic production, 42 per cent via commercial imports, and 9 per cent via food aid. In the late 1980s the situation was radically different: domestic production accounted for only 14 per cent, and the remaining 86 per cent was supplied through food aid.

Peasant agriculture plays a central role in Mozambican agricultural food production. However, in addition to the systematic impacts of natural disasters, droughts, floods and pests (de Brito 2015), peasants are also confronted with the risks arising from the territorialisation of capitalist agriculture's large projects and the control of territories by transnational mining companies. Land grabbing, expropriation, conflict and the extinction of traditional seeds due to the use of transgenic seeds etc. are causes for concern for entities such as the National Peasant's Union (*União Nacional de Camponeses*—UNAC),

highlighting the dilemmas of the agrarian question and agriculture in the country.

Our field research in Mozambique was carried out in the province and city of Inhambane, whose local economy is heavily reliant on tourism. Despite having very little fertile soil (unlike the Nacala Corridor in the north of the country, which is being appropriated by transnational capital), food production occurs in low wetland sites, known as *machambas*.

The experiences in Inhambane enabled us to grasp the reality of:

- work in the *machambas*;
- food production and the challenges of commercialisation;
- rudimentary cultivation techniques based on knowledge of working with the land, water and seeds;
- the organisation of farmers into associations; and
- the role of peasant women and the protection of seeds.

In the Inhambane city streets, it is common to see informal food markets that offer lettuce, cassava, beans and other produce grown in the surrounding rural areas.

The protection of seeds and their storage in seed banks are essential to ensure the reproduction of peasant practices and

“The spaces of peasant agriculture act as a systemic organism with complex relationships that constitute an alternative agricultural system.”



Photo: krugergirl26. Machamba, Machava, Mozambique, 2011 <<http://goo.gl/sZ7V7x>>.



Photo: Rosina. Food market at Maputo, Mozambique, 2012 <<http://goo.gl/OOQfqn>>.

the cultivation of food. In this sense, food sovereignty⁶ is not a separate issue from seed sovereignty. Seeds are cultivated and stored by Mozambican and other African peasants themselves, on the whole (UNAC 2014). Furthermore, traditional seeds are a central element of the knowledge of peasants' agricultural practices; therefore, they themselves already hold the potential to increase food production to better combat hunger.

The realities we encountered, and the dialogue with researchers and students from the Eduardo Mondlane University in Inhambane, evidenced the strategies that should be encouraged for the production and commercialisation of healthy foods.

The fact that peasants hardly use inputs external to their own productive lands and a production web of agroecological food—from growing to commercialisation—are elements that stand out. The spaces of peasant agriculture act as a systemic organism with complex relationships that constitute an alternative agricultural system, featuring crop diversification (polycultures) the use of agricultural practices concerned with the improvement and maintenance of soil fertility, and the preservation of the quality of water, seeds and the ecosystems of farmlands. The strengthening of commercialisation strategies geared towards open-air markets and other retail forms that include the direct participation of food producers can facilitate the

creation of short food circuits, resulting in a much closer relationship between peasants and end consumers.

Thus, examples highlighted in the research that could help consolidate this process are: i) investment in local markets, such as farmers' markets in different spaces—in the Eduardo Mondlane University itself with support from teachers and students, for example—to access the vast tourism markets (which would also require investment in food packaging, certification etc.); ii) rural extension; iii) increased investment and access to public policies that prioritise agroecological peasant practices; iv) the protection of native seeds; and v) the strengthening of local associations. This could result in the sustainable use of natural resources, through an agroecological transition reinforcing food sovereignty, and potentially resulting in a higher level of peasant autonomy and the adequate production of healthy food for the entire population. ●

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2. Federal University of Goiás (UFG).
3. Goiás State University (UEG).
4. ‘Peasant’ is understood here as a sociopolitical construct that is characterised by an identity and culture that are not in consort with capitalist agriculture.
5. ‘Quilombo’ communities are ethnic groups—predominantly made up of the rural or urban black population—who define themselves based on their particular relationships with the land, kinship, territory, ancestry, their own cultural traditions and practices’ (INCRA 2016). They were created through the resistance of enslaved people, who during the slave regime formed free territories in various regions of Brazil.
6. Nyéleni (2007) defines food sovereignty as “the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation.”

The realisation of the human right to adequate food and nutrition and the principle of prohibition of social regression as an argument for social struggles

by Valéria Burity¹

The concept of the human right to adequate food and nutrition

Since early human history, individuals and groups that control land and the process of food production have held a large amount of political power.

The affirmation that food and nourishment are fundamental rights, and not a commodity, is, above all, a form of questioning the historical structure of power (and of the market), by recognising that the State—government, people and territory—must organise itself to ensure that all people can exercise this right, regardless of their economic, social or generational condition and of their geographic, environmental and political circumstances.

This is the great conceptual advance illustrated by the fact that there are now international treaties, constitutions and laws that recognise the right to food, a recognition that results from historical social struggles.

The human right to adequate food and nutrition (HRTAFN) is established in many international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), adopted by the United Nations through Resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966. Some 164 countries around the world have ratified or adhered to this Covenant.

According to General Comment No. 12 (United Nations 1999) of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR),² which expounds on the concept of the right to food established in the ICESCR, the HRTAFN has two dimensions. The first, more immediate dimension is the right to be free of hunger. The second

dimension is achieved when “every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement” (United Nations 1999).

In general, the promotion of this right encompasses access to all necessary rights for people to feed themselves in a dignified and emancipatory manner, overcoming all injustices, inequalities and the lack of sustainability that affect the food process,³ which include racial, ethnic and gender inequalities.

Brazil: advances, limitations and regressions in the fulfilment of the human right to adequate food and nutrition

In Brazil there have been many advances in the field of social rights since 2003. The most significant achievements concerning the HRTAFN have been made regarding its first dimension, as revealed by indicators of food and nutrition security.

The main institutional and legal examples of this phenomenon were: the reinstatement of the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (*Conselho Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional*—CONSEA) in 2003, the approval of the Organic Law of Food and Nutrition Security in 2006 (Law No. 11.346/2006) with the resulting creation of the National System of Food and Nutrition Security, and the approval of Constitutional Amendment No. 64, which included the right to food in the list of social rights in Brazil’s Federal Constitution.

As a result of many efforts, according to the National Household Sample Survey (*Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios*—PNAD) of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística*—IBGE), dire food insecurity

in the country decreased continuously from 2004 (6.9 per cent) to 2013 (3.2 per cent), when it reached its lowest historical record (IBGE 2014). Because of this, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) declared that Brazil had left the Hunger Map.

These and other advances were recorded in the *State of Food Insecurity in the World* (SOFI) 2014 report (FAO 2014). This document attributes the Brazilian results to advances in the country’s legal and institutional frameworks and to the public programmes and policies that had been designed and implemented since 2003. Furthermore, the document emphasises the importance of social participation for these achievements.

It is important to note that, during the same period, concerning the second dimension of the HRTAFN, non-governmental organisations and social movements have harshly criticised not only officers of the executive authority but also the legislative and judicial authorities and state oversight bodies, pointing out, among others:

- the lack of land reform;
- the absence of guarantees over land and territories, especially for Afro-Brazilian populations, indigenous peoples and other traditional peoples and communities;
- the large support given to agribusiness in comparison to support for family farming;
- the authorisation of the cultivation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs);
- the lack of effective regulation of the use of agrochemicals; the support



Photo: Sérgio Amaral/MDS. Production of family farmers is used to feed children aged 2-5 in daycare, Federal District, Brazil, 2013 <<http://goo.gl/OOQfm>>.

for projects that negatively impacted human rights within and outside Brazil (Instituto Rosa Luxemburgo et al. 2009); and

- judicial decisions and laws harmful to fundamental rights.

The criticisms identified the development model and the food production and consumption model adopted in Brazil as structural causes of the violation of rights (CONSEA 2013).

Despite these negative aspects, many sectors also recognise social gains, which are now suffering an intense process of regression, due to the country’s current political situation.⁴

The interim government that was instituted during President Dilma Rousseff’s impeachment process has adopted several measures that negatively impact the fulfilment of social rights and, thus, the fulfilment of the HRTAFN.

According to some, these measures are perceived as striking the foundations that ensured the progress in the reduction of both hunger and poverty: the institutions that were created or strengthened over the last several years, the legal frameworks, the social programmes that inspired many countries in the southern hemisphere, and social participation. As examples, payments and budgetary and financial transfers to the Seasonal Family Farming

Plan (*Plano Safra*) were suspended, and the technical assistance and rural extension services offered to this sector and the acquisition of food by the National Supply Company (*Companhia Nacional de Abastecimento*—CONAB), under the Food Acquisition Programme (*Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos*—PAA),⁵ were paralysed (Intini 2016).

In addition, the Ministry of Agrarian Development was closed (Beghin 2016), and there were indications of regressions in the process of indigenous land demarcation (Barros 2016), and in the *Bolsa Família* cash transfer programme (Mariz 2016).

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has stated that, according to the Protocol of San Salvador, ratified by Brazil in 1996, regressions of economic, social and cultural rights are forbidden to States.

The IACHR (2016) has suggested that the interim government’s announcement that funding previously earmarked for social programmes related to housing, education and poverty reduction will be reduced could constitute a violation of this Protocol.

The principle of prohibition of social regression as an argument in the struggle for the human right to adequate food and nutrition

The origin of the principle of prohibition of social regression can be found in

“The affirmation that food and nourishment are fundamental rights, and not a commodity, is, above all, a form of questioning the historical structure of power.

“The human right to adequate food and nutrition is established in many international human rights treaties.



Photo: Sergio Amaral/MDS. Quilombola women participate in a community association and are beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família programme, Bahia, Brazil, 2014 <<http://goo.gl/98YCpF>>.

the 1970s, when, in Germany, possible restrictions on social benefits were discussed due to the economic crisis (Continentino 2015).

The principle was conceptualised as a clause of ‘prohibition of social counter-revolution’ or of ‘reactionary evolution’. This means that social and economic rights (...), once obtained in a certain degree of fulfilment, become, simultaneously, an institutional guarantee and a subjective right” (Canotilho 2006).

Some courts have been softening the adoption of this principle, a phenomenon known as the ‘judicial tradition of crisis’ and which refers to the decision by these courts that economic crises can justify the involution of rights.

However, in these cases, it is still recognised that, even in periods of contingencies, this principle is linked to economic and social democracy and that it imposes limits to legislators and other public officers (Continentino 2015).

In this sense, one of the instruments that explains the principle of prohibition of social regression in the most instructive manner is General Comment No. 3 of the CESCR (United Nations 1991), the document that describes the nature of Member States’ obligations when they ratify the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

This General Comment affirms that article 2.1 of the ICESCR contains an obligation of progressiveness—that is, that States should progressively strive towards the full realisation of the rights recognised in the Covenant, which implies both a positive and a negative dimension.

The positive dimension establishes the obligation to adopt measures that respect, protect, promote and provide the right to food and the other rights recognised in the Covenant. The negative dimension imposes on States the obligation to abstain from adopting measures that may result in regression of the advances made concerning these rights (Defensoria Del Pueblo de Colômbia 2009).

In addition, paragraph 9 of General Comment No. 3 determines that States must demonstrate that they are using the maximum available resources at their disposal to safeguard human rights and, moreover, that any potential retrogressive measures must be fully justified by reference to the totality of the rights provided for in the Covenant.

Therefore, if there is any concrete circumstance that requires the involution of a process of implementation of rights, it is necessary to demonstrate that the measure obeys the principle of proportionality—that it is necessary and that it is the most effective and least harmful measure to the holders of rights (Continentino 2015).

In this way, the principle of prohibition of regression, together with a human rights approach, is an important political argument. The counter-hegemonic use of rights can, on the one hand, bolster the direct struggles led by popular movements, especially by substantiating actions to combat the criminalisation of protests against retrogressions and in favour of the implementation of rights.

On the other hand, it can also substantiate the ability to demand rights through States’ institutional mechanisms and to protect human rights in Brazil and worldwide. Historically, the struggle for rights has led to their recognition in many national and international regulations. This recognition can and should strengthen, in turn, these same struggles, in a counter-hegemonic cycle of building and demanding rights. ●

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1. Secretary-General of FIAN Brazil.
2. “The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) is the body of 18 independent experts that monitors implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights by its States parties. The Committee was established under United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution 1985/17 of 28 May 1985 to carry out the monitoring functions assigned to the ECOSOC in Part IV of the Covenant” (OHCHR 2016).
3. The concept of ‘food process’ (*proceso alimentario, in the original*) and its relationship with the HRTAFN can be found in more detail in Morales González (2013).
4. This article was written and submitted for publication in July 2016.
5. Created in 2003 under the Zero Hunger programme, the PAA programme in Brazil has two basic purposes: promoting access to food and supporting family farming.



Photo: Ana Nascimento/MDS. Children of Bolsa Família beneficiaries are fed at daycare, Minas Gerais, Brazil, 2013 <<http://goo.gl/OOQqfn>>.

“The counter-hegemonic use of rights can bolster the direct struggles led by popular movements.



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Food is not a mere commodity or a ‘medicine’; it is the expression of a social process of eating and nourishment, within which nutritional well-being is not only the ultimate goal but also a prerequisite.

**Flavio Luiz Schieck Valente
and Denisse Córdova Montes**

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The evolution of the human right to adequate food and nutrition for all depends on the realisation of the full scope of women’s (as well as men’s) political and economic rights.

Anne C. Bellows and Stefanie Lemke

“

Land and water grabbing promotes harmful industrial agriculture at the expense of both rural and urban communities.

**Massa Koné, Chantal Jacovetti,
and Valentin Hategekimana**