

# THE FOME ZERO (ZERO HUNGER) PROGRAM THE BRAZILIAN EXPERIENCE

EDITORS:

JOSÉ GRAZIANO DA SILVA  
MAURO EDUARDO DEL GROSSI  
CAIO GALVÃO DE FRANÇA

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## THE BRAZILIAN EXPERIENCE

Ministry of Agrarian Development  
Brasília, 2011

DILMA VANA ROUSSEFF  
President of the Republic

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Minister of State for Agrarian  
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ABRAHÃO  
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Studies and Rural Development

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(CENTER FOR AGRARIAN STUDIES  
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT)  
SBN, Quadra 2, Edifício Sarkis  
Bloco D – loja 10 – sala S2  
ZIP CODE: 70040-910  
Brasília-Federal District  
Phone: + 55 61 2020-0189  
www.nead.gov.br

COORDINATING BOARD FOR  
COMMUNICATIONS AND EDITORIAL  
PRODUCTION  
Ana Carolina Fleury

REVISION AND PREPARATION OF  
ORIGINAL TEXTS IN PORTUGUESE  
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TRANSLATION  
Luiz Marcos Vasconcelos

GRAPHIC DESIGN, COVER AND LAYOUT  
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## FOREWORD

Well into the twenty-first century, there are around 850 million undernourished people in the world. The scourge of hunger has been present throughout the history of humanity, but it is unacceptable that today so many people are still unable to eat properly despite the availability of modern means of food production.

Convinced that hunger can and must be eradicated, President Lula took a clear political decision and launched, in 2003, the Zero Hunger project, which mobilized various public and private efforts around a common goal: that of overcoming the food and nutritional insecurity that affects thousands of Brazilians.

This book deals with the Zero Hunger Program, reflecting on its formulation and implementation, the public instruments that have been jointly mobilized, the strategic role of family farming in the process, and some of its results. More importantly, it also contains valuable recommendations for countries that are studying this issue seriously.

The aim of the Ministry of Agrarian Development in presenting this new edition is to broaden and open up the debate to new audiences. We hope that it will prove of benefit to all those who dream of a world without hunger.

**Gilberto José Vargas Spier (Pepe Vargas)**

*Minister of State for Agrarian Development*

## INTRODUCTION TO THE PORTUGUESE EDITION

*"We are going to create appropriate conditions for all people in our country to have three decent meals a day, every day, without having to depend on donations from anybody. Brazil can no longer put up with so much inequality. We need to eradicate hunger, extreme poverty, and social exclusion. Our war is not meant to kill anyone – it is meant to save lives."*

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva  
President of the Republic  
Inauguration Speech, January 1, 2003

Brazil is an international benchmark today when it comes to food security, rural development, and poverty eradication policies. This is so for three reasons. The first one is that eradicating hunger and fighting poverty have become key objectives on the domestic agenda. The fact that these objectives were included in the agenda as organizing elements of Brazil's macroeconomic policy is the second reason. And, finally, the third reason is that a national food and nutrition security policy and system have been created and consolidated based on a new legal and institutional framework and on a renewed set of public policies.

The results show that these decisions were correct. The country has managed to achieve the first goal of the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations Organization – reducing extreme poverty by half between 1990 and 2015 – ten years before the deadline. Actions to reduce poverty and inequality continue at an intense pace. In rural areas, poverty and inequality were more pronouncedly reduced than in urban and metropolitan areas.

The income of family farmers increased by 33 % in the 2003-2009 period, more than the national average of 13 %. And the most important aspect is that this evolution was mainly brought about by

a higher labor income, resulting from new policies designed to guarantee the right to the land, promote gender equality, and support family farming production.

The synergy between these policies, involving actions to promote economic stability and growth, increases in the minimum wage, greater access to the social security system – particularly to social welfare benefits – and universal social policies, especially the *Bolsa Família* (Family Grant) program, explain the positive results achieved in rural areas. This set of policies boosted new work and income opportunities, leading to a new development dynamic with a more equitable income distribution.

These positive effects reflect an accumulation of political and social actions in Brazil on the path to its redemocratization. The inclusion of new social rights in the Federal Constitution of 1988; the creation of the Food Security Council in 1993; the holding of the 1st National Conference on Food and Nutrition Security in 1994; and the “Citizens’ Action against Hunger and Poverty and for Life” in the years that followed raised the profile of the food security topic and strengthened social mobilization around it. A connection was thus established with the intellectual and militant work of Josué de Castro, who back in 1946 said, in his book “The Geography of Hunger,” that “hunger and war do not obey any natural law, as they are purely human creations.”

The launch of the “Zero Hunger Project – a proposal for a food security policy for Brazil” in October 2001 through the Citizenship Institute by the then candidate for the presidency Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva reflected the maturing of the topic and its inclusion in the agenda of the Workers’ Party. It was not a matter of beginning to discuss the topic, but rather of turning it into a national priority to be addressed through well-planned and decisive actions of the State, stimulated by society’s participation.

With the electoral victory of President Lula in 2003, the Zero Hunger project became the main governmental strategy guiding economic and social policies in Brazil. That was the beginning of an inflection marked by leaving behind the dichotomy between economic and social policies and integrating structural and emergency policies into actions to fight hunger and poverty. New, differentiated policies for family farming were implemented and basic legislation was built for the national food and nutrition security policy.

The commitment to promote regional integration, south-south cooperation, and a renewed international agenda led to the active participation of Brazil in different international initiatives: Latin America without Hunger 2025, Brazil-Africa Dialogue on Food Security and Rural Development, reform of the Committee on World Food Security of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), among others.

This book includes some fundamental texts for understanding the Brazilian Zero Hunger experience at different moments of its eight-year implementation period, with reflections on different aspects of the program.

The first chapter presents the original proposal of the Zero Hunger Program, launched in 2001, to clarify the main elements that were proposed for designing it. After the project was launched, this proposal was critically assessed by different groups of thought, leading its coordinators to prepare a “Response to Critics” in 2002.

When the Lula administration was inaugurated in 2003, the Zero Hunger proposal began to be implemented under the coordination of the Extraordinary Ministry of Food Security and Hunger Combat, when a huge legal effort was made to define tools for implementing the food security policy. Two of the main initiatives taken for this purpose were the Food Card Program, to enable families to buy food, and the Food Acquisition Program (PAA), a mechanism for public procurement of food produced by family farmers. These and other initiatives will be described in detail in the third chapter.

Starting in 2004, all agencies of the federal administration in charge of addressing the topic were reorganized with the aim of increasing the reach of the Zero Hunger Program. Special mention should be made of the incorporation of the Food Card initiative into the *Bolsa Família* program, which unified all governmental cash transfers to families facing food and nutrition insecurity. Advances in the set of different policies that made up the Zero Hunger Program until 2010 will be described in the fourth chapter.

The implementation of the program in 2003 also mobilized various segments of society. The fifth chapter describes the experience of mobilizing entrepreneurs to support the Zero Hunger Program.

In 2006, the last year of the first term of President Lula, the FAO carried out an evaluation of the Zero Hunger Program. This

analysis, which showed advances and challenges facing the project, will be presented in chapter six. This was also the moment in which academic publications on the topic were issued, and we describe, in chapter seven, the debate that was held on the relation between food and nutrition security policies and cash transfer programs.

Family farming played a prominent role in the Zero Hunger Program since its initial design stages due to its capacity to respond to public policies. The experience of the Food Acquisition Program (PAA), one of the main differentiated agricultural policies, is told in detail in the eighth chapter.

For the purpose of promoting greater integration among public policies designed for Brazil's poorest areas and ensuring their effectiveness, the Territories of Citizenship Program was launched in 2008. The preparation of the program and its implementation are reported in chapter nine.

The participation of civil society has always been a key element of the Zero Hunger Program and, for this reason, the important actions taken by the National Food and Nutrition Security Council – CONSEA – will be described in the two following chapters.

At the end of the eight-year administration of President Lula, the achievements of the program can be assessed, as well as challenges to be addressed to ensure food and nutrition security and the results achieved since it was initially proposed, which will be discussed in chapters 12 and 13. Based on the Brazilian experience, the last chapter of this publication presents a series of suggestions for drawing up and implementing food and nutrition security policies.

This is a book dedicated to those who believe that equality and solidarity are universal and contemporary values; to those who stubbornly believe that building a different world is possible.

Enjoy it!

***Guilherme Cassel***

*Minister of State for Agrarian Development (2006 - 2010)*

# 1. THE ZERO HUNGER PROJECT: A PROPOSAL FOR A FOOD SECURITY POLICY FOR BRAZIL

In behalf of the Citizenship Institute, I am please to submit to public debate the Zero Hunger Project – A Proposal for a Food Security Policy for Brazil<sup>1</sup>. This project constitutes the synthesis of one year of work that involved many companions and the participation of representatives of NGOs, research institutes, trade unions, grassroots organizations, social movements, and experts in food security from all over Brazil.

The right to quality food is an inalienable right of all citizens and it is the State's duty to create appropriate conditions for the Brazilian population to enjoy this right. The audience to be contemplated in this proposal is large: 9.3 million very poor families (or 44 million people) earning less than a dollar a day.

This terrible scenario has worsened in recent years due to rising unemployment rates and non-food expenses borne by poorer families (housing, transportation, health care, education). According to research carried out by Embrapa (*Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation*), our farmers have the potential to produce all the food our population needs. There is hunger in Brazil not for lack of food, but for lack of money in the pockets of workers to buy it.

The task of eradicating hunger and ensuring the right to quality food should not consist only in a government proposal, even if all sectoral agencies are efficiently linked at the federal, state and municipal levels to carry it out. Engaging organized civil society in this struggle is fundamental: trade unions, grassroots associations, NGOs, universities, schools, churches of different beliefs, entrepreneurial organizations are all invited to take part in this task.

Ensuring food security is fostering a true revolution that involves, apart from economic and social aspects, the promotion of

1. Original version available at <[www.icidadania.org.br](http://www.icidadania.org.br)>, launched by Citizenship Institute in October 2001.

deep changes in the political framework. In many regions of Brazil, poverty persists because, among other reasons, it makes it easier for the conservative élites that have been ruling this country for centuries to perpetuate in power.

We want to make it clear in this publication that the key element of the Zero Hunger Project lies in an appropriate combination between so-called structural policies – designed to redistribute income, promote production, generate jobs, foster an agrarian reform, among other purposes – and interventions of an emergency nature, often referred to as compensatory policies. If actions are limited to the latter while structural policies continue to generate unemployment, concentrate the income, and increase poverty – as we see happening in Brazil today –, resources are squandered, society is deceived, and the problem is perpetuated.

The contrary is also inadmissible. Subordinating the fight against hunger to securing deep changes in structural policies as a first step would mean giving up solidarity, which constitutes an imperative duty of all citizens toward millions of Brazilians who are condemned to social exclusion and to not having enough to eat today. Years or even decades might be necessary for structural policies to bear consistent fruit. Hunger continues to kill people every day or causing social and family disaggregation, diseases, despair, and increasing violence.

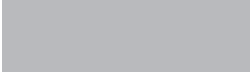
This is why the Zero Hunger Project – a public-domain project, which can therefore be applied by political mandate-holders of any party – seeks to combine measures falling under these two categories of policies. But there is no doubt that we gave top priority to systematizing measures that can be implemented immediately, without losing sight of the deep changes that are required for building a new Brazil or relegating them to secondary importance. The task is one of building a fully feasible and promising Brazil, where democracy is present in the economic-social realm, justice is a goal pursued by all, and solidarity is the general rule of coexistence.

This proposal is intended to unleash a process of ongoing discussions, improvements and concrete actions for our country to ensure the basic right to quality food to all its citizens. We are aware that this Zero Hunger Project can still be improved and changed for the better. We need, for example, to detail the operational aspects of the various proposals it contains at different intervention levels.

A key point is identifying permanent mechanisms to involve civil society as a whole in a broad mobilization process for ensuring healthy food to all our citizens. It is a call for a national, relentless effort to eradicate hunger from our Country as our lifetime dream and commitment.

***Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva***

Citizenship Institute, October 2001.



# ZERO HUNGER PROJECT

## SUMMARY DOCUMENT

### INTRODUCTION

The Zero Hunger Project is the result of one year of work involving experts and representatives of NGOs, research institutes, grassroots organizations and social movements dealing with food security-related issues from all over Brazil who were brought together by the Citizenship Institute to draw up a proposal for a Food and Nutrition Security Policy.

The results were surprising: in our country, there are at least 9.3 million families – 44 million people – earning less than a dollar a day. This is the poverty line adopted by the World Bank, based on the per capita income of poor people living in the poorest countries of Africa. Most very poor Brazilian families live in small and medium-sized cities in rural areas (4.3 million families or 20 million people) and in metropolitan regions (2 million families or 9 million people). Poverty still affects almost 3 million families in rural areas (15 million people). Even the Southeast Region, Brazil's most developed region, hosts a huge number of poor people (2.6 million families or 11.5 million people). And an aggravating factor is that poverty has been growing precisely in metropolitan regions, particularly in São Paulo City, where most of the country's wealth is concentrated.

The conclusion one can reach is that poverty is not a fugitive, occasional problem, but rather the result of a perverse growth model based on very low salaries that has led to increasing income concentration and unemployment. Unfortunately, this scenario has worsened in recent years as a result of rising unemployment rates and spending with food out of the household and other non-food expenses (housing, transportation, health care, education) of poorer families.

The Zero Hunger Project was based on the assumption that all people should be able to access food in sufficient quantity and quality to meet their basic nutritional needs and preserve their health on a daily basis and with dignity. Ensuring this right is a prerequisite for citizenship and for a nation to be considered civilized. The right to food is an element of all other civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Its recognition means that the State must ensure access to food in sufficient quantity and quality to citizens through a permanent food and nutrition security policy. To implement such a policy, mobilizing citizens at all levels is key, so as to ensure, apart from political decisions of rulers, the actual participation of society at large.

The embryo of a National Food Security Policy began to be implemented in Brazil during the Itamar Franco administration (1993-1994), based on a proposal submitted by the Workers' Party two years before, in 1991. Launched in 1993, the Citizens' Action against Hunger and Poverty and for Life paved the way for the emergence of a much broader social movement led by the sociologist Herbert de Souza, which took the form of thousands of solidarity-oriented committees against hunger. This mobilization ensured a huge gain to the government in terms of legitimacy, lending vitality to the recently-created National Food Security Council (Consea).

Due to the dismantling of most policies that were being discussed at that moment (Consea, Prodea, Inan, regulatory stocks, among others) Brazil lacks a National Food Security Policy today. What we do have is an increase in municipal, state, and civil-society initiatives to assist the low-income population. The current proposals of the federal administration are of a merely localized nature and usually intended to supplement the income of poor families at levels that are not sufficient to eliminate hunger.

The available data show that the aggregate levels of lack of food and indigence have stabilized in recent years. However, poverty and indigence have been increasing in metropolitan regions since 1995. The causes are associated with high unemployment and underemployment rates and with the low wages earned by the population.

Among the poor, the unemployment rate in metropolitan areas is three times higher than among the non-poor. Based on data of the 1999 National Household Sample Survey (Pnad) carried out

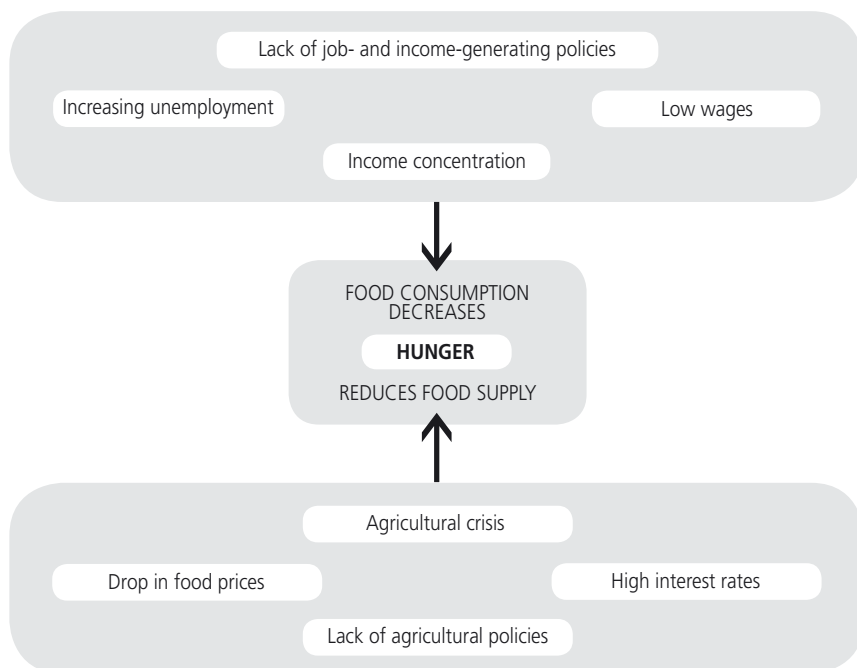
by the Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the Zero Hunger Project identified the existence of 9.3 million and 44 million very poor families and people (with an income of less than one dollar a day, or about R\$ 80.00 a month in August 2001), respectively, who were seen as potential beneficiaries of this project due to their vulnerability to hunger. This poor population accounts for 22 % of all Brazilian families and for 28 % of Brazil's total population, namely, 19 % of the population (or 9 million people) of metropolitan regions, 25 % of the population (20 million people) of non-metropolitan urban areas, and 46 % of the rural population (15 million people). This population is strongly concentrated in the northeast region (50 % of the poor) and in the southeast region (26 %). In the remaining regions, the percentage is 9 % in the north region, 10 % in the south region, and 5 % in the mid-west region. The average income of these families is R\$ 48.61 (figures of August 2001), that is, less than 10 % of the income of non-poor families.

A diagnosis of the hunger problem in Brazil in the early 21st century suggests that demand for food is insufficient in the country, preventing commercial agriculture and agriindustry from stepping up food production. The reasons for this insufficient demand – excessive income concentration, low wages, high unemployment levels and low growth rates, particularly in sectors that could hire more people – are not conjunctural. On the contrary, they are endogenous to the current growth pattern and, therefore, inseparable from the prevailing economic model. A true vicious circle is thus formed which, in the final analysis, is the main cause of hunger in the country – namely, unemployment, drop in purchasing power, lower food supply, more unemployment, further drop in purchasing power, further reduction in food supply (*see figure on the following page*).

For the hunger problem in Brazil to be eliminated for good, a new economic development model that attaches priority to promoting growth with income distribution is required, so that Brazil's domestic market can be expanded while generating more jobs, ensuring higher wages and, more specifically, recovering the purchasing power of the minimum wage, which today is sort of a “headlight” for the income of the poorest segments of the population.

In other words, to ensure food security to all the Brazilian population, changes are needed in the current economic develop-

## The vicious circle of hunger

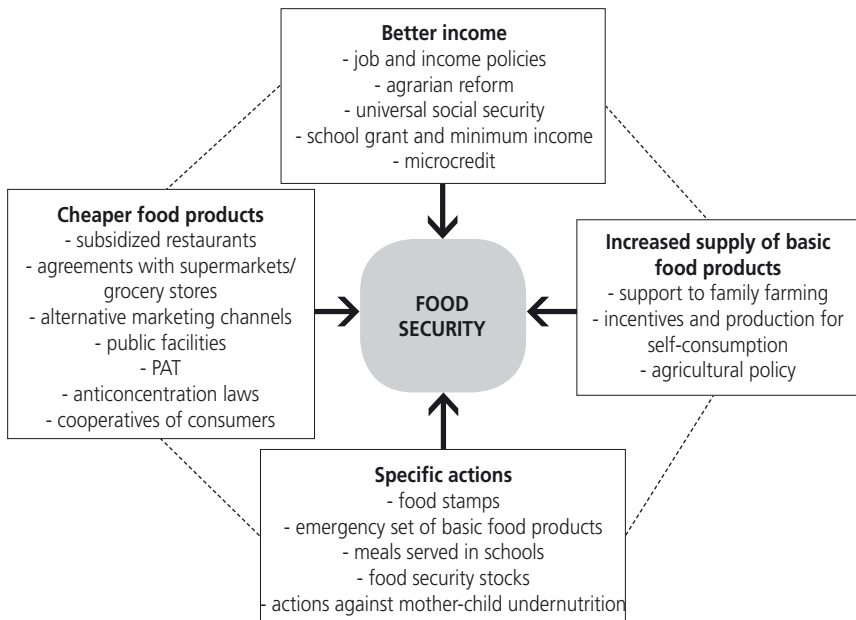


ment model, which leads to social exclusion, of which hunger is only another visible result, as are unemployment, extreme poverty, and land and income concentration. In the process of implementing a new economic model, it is imperative, on the one hand, to implement emergency actions to lower food prices for the low-income population; on the other hand, emergency actions are also required to provide direct assistance to the population already facing hunger.

In sum, the hunger issue in Brazil involves three fundamental aspects in the early 21st century: the first one is insufficient demand, resulting from the country's income concentration and high unemployment and underemployment levels and from the low purchasing power of the wages paid to the majority of the working class. The second one is the inconsistency between current food prices and the low purchasing power of the majority of the population in Brazil. And the third but not least important aspect is the exclusion of the poorest segments of the population from the market.

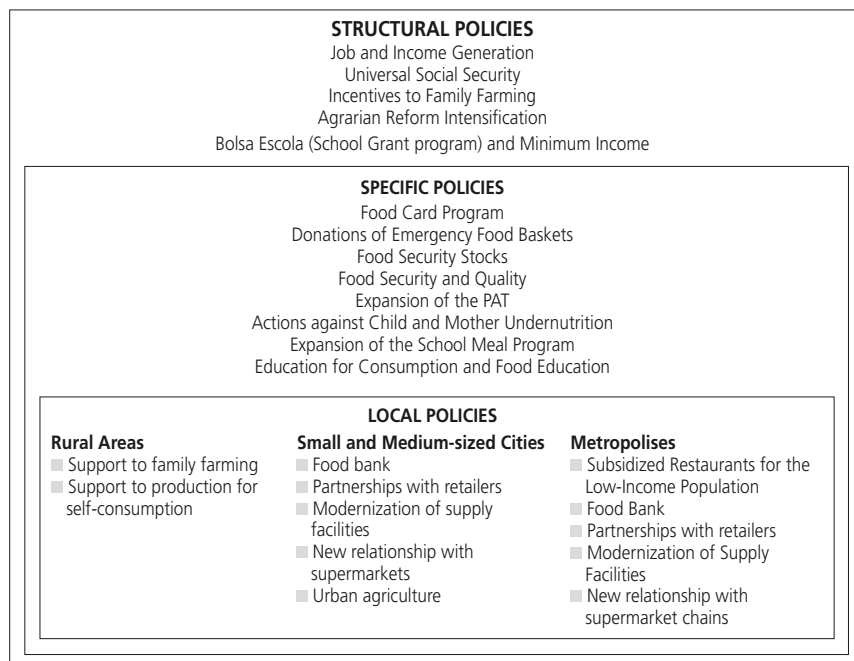
To break this perverse cycle of hunger, the State's intervention is necessary to ensure access to the food market to those who are already excluded from the labor market and/or whose income is insufficient to feed their families with dignity. In short, it is a matter, on the one hand, of creating mechanisms – some of which of an emergency character and others of a permanent nature – for the low-income population that is vulnerable to hunger to have cheaper access to food. On the other hand, there is a need to stimulate the supply of cheap food products, even if through self-consumption and/or subsistence production. And, finally, those who are excluded now need to be included, considering that access to basic food products is an inalienable right of all human beings.

The diagram below details the main policies to be implemented. First, it should be recalled that none of them can, isolatedly, tackle the hunger issue, much less ensure food security to the population. Second, these policies should necessarily combine emergency actions with structural measures and break away from false dichotomies based on the separation between the economic and social realms, which are so deeply-rooted in neoliberal schemes that lead to wealth concentration and poverty and then manage “social” policies to attenuate the latter.



As was seen when the population to be assisted was defined, there is a significant number of very poor people who are vulnerable to hunger in large metropolises or in the outskirts of small and medium-sized cities in non-metropolitan regions. The profile of hunger in urban areas is different than in rural areas. Because of the greater availability of food in cities, part of their low-income population seeks assistance from non-governmental organizations, public agencies or even neighbors and relatives. The large amount of food that is thrown away in cities, for example, allows part of this population that is vulnerable to hunger to have access to food of some kind, albeit of bad quality. Therefore, we can say that for hunger in cities – particularly in metropolitan regions – to be tackled, it is necessary to implement some policies that are different from those adopted in rural areas, where food is harder to come by, as paradoxical as this may sound. It is perhaps more correct to say that “vulnerability” to lack of food derived from poverty is more common in urban areas than hunger itself, which results in a reduced body mass.

### Scheme of the Zero Hunger Project proposal



## ZERO HUNGER PROJECT FRAMEWORK

Different population groups require specific policies to address the hunger issue, particularly in the short and medium term. A summary will be presented below of a set of proposals for each of these groups – some of a structural and others of an emergency nature – to increase the availability of food at low prices and the access of vulnerable populations to healthy food as well.

### STRUCTURAL POLICIES

These are policies that have major effects on reducing the food vulnerability of families by increasing the family income, ensuring universal social rights and access to quality food, and reducing income inequalities.

#### *Policies designed to generate jobs and increase the income*

Giving priority to reducing social inequalities through a better income distribution – for this purpose, a key measure is resuming the policy to raise the minimum wage to the floor of one hundred dollars and reduce the gap between the minimum wage and the highest wages paid in Brazil. In addition, we believe that it is fundamental to resume the experience of establishing temporary work fronts in regions marked by high seasonal unemployment rates; training programs and incentives for ensuring a first job for young people; and ongoing refresher programs, particularly for people above the age of 40.

Credit for investments through BNDES, Banco do Brasil, CEF (Caixa Econômica Federal, Brazil's federal savings bank) and for consumption through solidarity-based microcredit schemes made available through specific branches should be strengthened to leverage local production and consumption.

Recovering a quality public primary and lower secondary education, children's education networks, and the educational infrastructure in rural areas is fundamental.

Recovering a housing policy is also key, both for generating jobs and for promoting solutions to the Brazilian housing deficit.

#### *Intensification of the Agrarian Reform*

The Zero Hunger Project defends a massive land distribution

process as a structural development policy and a strategic tool for fighting Brazil's historical land and income concentration.

The Agrarian Reform is justified on four main grounds: it promotes an income redistribution process, it expands sources of income for families, it is a source of food for self-consumption, and it boosts regional economies. According to data collected in new agrarian reform settlements, there were significant improvements in the quality of life in them, reducing the vulnerability of their population to hunger.

Preliminary estimates based on data of the 1999 National Household Sample Survey suggest that there is a potential beneficiary audience of 1 million families (which do not own land or whose land is too small and one or more members of which are unemployed) in rural areas to be settled on a priority basis. The costs for implementing settlements range from R\$ 10,000 to R\$ 20,000 for each settled family, depending on the amount paid for the land and on the infrastructure available in the settlements.

### *Universal access to the social security system*

The 1988 Constitution expanded social rights under the Social Security system, recognizing the household economy regime in agriculture/livestock activities as entitled to minimum social welfare coverage for elderly and disabled people, widows and widowers, with positive discrimination in favor of women (reduction of minimum age for retirement). This special social security regime was fully preserved in the current constitutional text after Amendment 20 of December 1998 was passed (art. 195, § 8 and art. 201, §§ 2 and 7, II).

On the other hand, this recognition of minimum social welfare rights in relation to family work in agriculture/livestock was not followed by equal treatment to non-agricultural work. This kind of work continues, in general, subjected to the rules applied to formal work, as only those who can confirm that they have individually contributed to the social security system for a certain period are entitled to the benefits of the system. This situation needs to be corrected by extending the same rights enjoyed by the household economy regime to urban family work.

The idea is simple: recognizing that all urban and rural “self-occupied” workers are engaged in necessary social work and are eligible to the social security right of one minimum wage, regardless of whether they are below the poverty line or not.

Preliminary estimates based on data of the 1999 National Household Sample Survey indicate that there is a potential audience of 2.9 million people who are above the required age for receiving the benefit but are not covered by any public retirement or pension system. If all of these people are assisted at once, the costs involved would amount to R\$ 6.3 billion.

***Bolsa Escola (School Grant program) and Minimum Income***

Following the example of various municipal, state and federal experiences, the provision of a minimum income to low-income families with school-age children is proposed, conditioning this income to improvements in the educational standards of the Brazilian population through, for example, the establishment of an educational fund for children.

Estimates of the potential audience to be assisted suggest that there are 3.3 million children aged from 7 to 15 years old who are not attending school. If the benefit is three times higher than the cash transfer currently available under the federal *Bolsa Escola* program, which is R\$ 45.00, the costs of this program would amount to R\$ 853.7 million.

***Incentives to family farming***

The Zero Hunger Project considers it essential to adopt an agricultural policy that truly favors family farming in Brazil, with the aim of increasing food production and protecting low-income farmers. This can be achieved through a set of policies combining: agricultural insurance; priority to domestic production, relying on imports only if there are harvest failures; incentives to public research combined an effective technical assistance policy; a credit policy; incentives to setting up production and marketing cooperatives; incentives to protecting nature and the landscape through the payment of an environmental income in compulsory preservation areas, among many other measures.

**SPECIFIC POLICIES**

These are policies intended to promote food security and directly fight hunger and undernutrition among low-income population segments.

*The Food Stamp Program (Cupom Alimentação - PCA)*

The goal of the Food Stamp Program (PCA) is to replace the traditional “policy” against hunger based on the supply of basic food baskets, which are temporary and subject to oscillations, apart from generating dependence and corruption. The main advantages of the Program lie in the possibility of reaching the poorest population (as the Milk Distribution Program of 1986 and the US program did, which have been in existence for almost 40 years) and of connecting consumers without any purchasing power to small food producers. This is why the PCA can be a massive program without running the risk of causing the typical inflationary impacts of programs that generate income distribution in the short run. It channels the additional spending capacity of poorer consumers to buying food products, stimulating the production of small local farmers, who recognizedly constitute a sector with idle capacity in Brazil.

The PCA proposed here has four basic features:

a) it complements the household income of very poor families up to the poverty line, regardless of whether or not they are beneficiary of other programs, such as the Minimum Income, the *Bolsa Escola*, the Social Welfare and the Unemployment Insurance programs, among others;

b) it always requires a specific counterpart from the families assisted by the program in terms of occupation of their adult members, who are, for example, required to attend literacy or professional training courses or even to provide community services according to their professional skills, apart from being monitored by health care teams, etc.;

c) the families receive food stamp benefits for a predefined period of six months to one year, which can be extended after an assessment for as long as the causes of their food insecurity are not fully eliminated;

d) the stamps can only be used to buy food products in supermarkets, stores or fairs or from farmers registered beforehand. The stamps cannot be used in restaurants or similar facilities that are not preregistered. This restriction is also applied to all other non-food items, such as cigarettes, cleaning products, medicines, alcoholic beverages, and any sweet or salty fast-food products.

In the first years of implementation of the PCA, the idea is to give priority to families that have already applied for the fol-

lowing programs: agrarian reform settlements or families that are confirmedly poor that applied for the program by mail and are still waiting to be settled; *Bolsa Escola* (School Grant) or *Bolsa Alimentação* (Food Grant) Programs; unemployed people who are beneficiaries of the unemployment insurance or not; families with malnourished or at-risk children and/or adults referred to the program by the public health care system who are not yet assisted by previous programs.

The priority attached to these families is justified, first, by the fact that they are already registered, avoiding the need to wait until the PCA has a record of its own to be implemented. Second, considering that the PCA is a program aimed at complementing the household income, its benefits will significantly improve the results achieved by other programs already under way.

The idea is to implement the PCA gradually, beginning with a pilot program in the first year, focusing on regions affected by droughts in the northeast region and increasing its reach as food supply and necessary resources are expanded, with the aim of achieving the goal of covering all very poor families with a per capita income of less than one dollar a day.

The stamps are distributed in the form of paper stamps printed by the Mint with a specific validity period or magnetic cards. It is recommended that urban populations are given electronic stamps, thus minimizing the possibility of the emergence of a “black market” of food stamps. In rural areas and small and medium-sized cities where using cards is difficult, the stamps must have a specific validity period (from one to three months) to be exchanged for food products.

Estimates suggest a potential beneficiary audience of 9.3 million very poor families. The total cost of the program was estimated at about R\$ 20 billion if all families were covered in one year.

### *Expansion and rechanneling of the Workers' Food Program (Programa de Alimentação do Trabalhador - PAT)*

The way the PAT is structured today excludes formally registered workers and employees of small companies falling under the simple taxation regime. These are precisely the workers who earn the lowest wages and should be given priority in programs against hunger.

There is no way that PAT resources can be transferred to informal workers who remain in the informal market. This audience, as well as unemployed people, can be supported by the PCA – Food Stamp Program. For workers in small enterprises, the objective of the reform we are proposing for the PAT is to attract them to the program.

The Zero Hunger Project proposes the establishment of compensation mechanisms for companies falling under the simple taxation regime, the income tax of which would be calculated based on their assumed profit and would be exempted from food-related benefits granted to their workers. These compensations could take the form of discounts on the simple taxation regime. The assumed profit would be deducted, taking into account the amount of benefits granted to workers.

Estimates indicate that there are 15.7 million formal workers not covered by the PAT. Including all of these workers in the PAT would result in tax waivers in the order of R\$ 203.7 million.

### *Donation of emergency basic food baskets*

The Zero Hunger Project proposes that hungry people (with low energy), populations affected by natural disasters (droughts and floods, for example) and people recently settled under the agrarian reform program have the right to receive basic food baskets for a given period. Experience shows that when a natural disaster strikes, there are always certain agents who take advantage of the situation to withhold food products, increase their sales or replace products with others of lower quality.

Apart from this more specific audience, there are also families that meet the criteria of the Food Stamp program but live in locations that are far away from markets where they can buy food. The idea is to include these groups in the Food Stamp Program gradually as soon as a local market is developed.

### *Fighting mother-child undernutrition*

More active measures should be taken not only to correct, but also to prevent child undernutrition by assisting children less than one year old, pregnant women and mothers during breastfeeding. One of them is expanding the supply of food products such as milk and of basic nutrients such as iron and vitamins for

children registered in health care and social work networks with the aim of ensuring universal access to existing programs.

Estimates of the project showed that there is a potential audience of 1.3 million children with chronic undernutrition in Brazil and 1.2 million mothers of these children to be assisted on a priority basis by this program.

### *Keeping food security stocks*

The Zero Hunger Project proposes the establishment of food stocks to ensure food security, namely, a minimum amount of items included in the basic set of food products consumed by the population during the necessary period to import them or expand their supply.

Two elements should be taken into account in the process of structuring a food security stock policy:

- a) procurement in producing regions for local self-consumption should be encouraged;
- b) food imports should be avoided whenever the domestic availability of food is sufficient.

### *Expanding the school meal program*

Analyses of available data on consumption of meals in schools show that the contribution of meals served in schools to meet the energy and nutritional needs (particularly of minerals) of the program's target group is low. Our proposal is to increase the caloric and nutritional contribution of meals served in schools, which today is, by law, of only 15%. Some studies showed that this percentage can be much higher, to the point of even meeting 100% of all daily energy and nutritional needs in some municipalities.

In addition, this assistance should also be extended to the siblings of the students and to children's education facilities (day-care centers and municipal children's education schools), particularly in poorer municipalities.

Another important requirement is that of using regional products in the meals served in schools. Surveys show that the participation of local farmers in the procurement of food items to be used in these meals is still very low. Better technical support to the Municipal School Meal Councils and local farmers would also ensure the provision of fresher food items (necessary fruits and

vegetables) consistent with local cultural features and would generate more income for farmers and agriindustry in the region.

It is estimated that there are about 35 million school-age children in Brazil. If the current federal cash transfer per child/day, R\$ 0.13, is doubled, it is estimated that the additional cost would amount to about R\$ 909 million, a figure that does not include assistance to siblings of the students and the children's education network in poorer municipalities.

### *Ensuring the safety and quality of food products*

Focusing on prevention rather than correction is another challenge for a program designed to ensure the safety of food products in Brazil. Activities such as preventive control, implementation of a food safety information and surveillance system, education of individuals involved in the production chain, scientific studies and transfer of technology and methods to prevent risks and improve the safety of food products should be given priority. It is also fundamental that consumers be provided with information on the origin of food items consumed by them on their label, apart from informative materials on the risks of genetically modified products.

Consistent with the diagnosis that hunger in Brazil today is not a problem caused by the unavailability of food, but rather by lack of access to it, we do not agree with the idea that the production of transgenic food can help fight hunger in the country. It is also necessary to control the entry of transgenic food products to Brazil until sufficient research is carried out to confirm that they do not pose risks to human health and the environment.

### *Food education programs and education for consumption*

Two problems are associated with the lack of a balanced diet: quantitative inappropriateness (excess or lack) and qualitative inappropriateness. Therefore, food education can have major preventive effects in fighting both undernutrition and obesity.

The Zero Hunger Project proposes actions on two fronts, the first of which would be an active participation of public authorities in promoting campaigns and lectures on food education and education for consumption.

The second one would be the creation and implementation of the Brazilian Rule for Marketing of Industrialized Food Products

(NBCAI), similar to the one that was successfully implemented since the 1980s with the aim of promoting breastfeeding.

## LOCAL POLICIES

The Zero Hunger Project also proposes a set of policies that can be implemented by states and municipalities, most of which in partnership with civil society. Basically, these are relatively successful programs already under way in municipalities. Some of the proposals are detailed by areas of residence (metropolitan urban areas, non-metropolitan urban areas and rural areas), with their specificities pointed out.

### *Municipal food security programs*

Experience has revealed the importance of having a municipal secretariat (or department) devoted to food supply.

At municipal level, there are different agencies, usually reporting to municipal secretariats, that can act jointly in this field: food supply secretariats (usually in charge of managing facilities); agriculture secretariats (active in the rural/agricultural area); education secretariats (area of the school meal program); health care secretariats (mother-child undernutrition prevention and combat, for example); social work secretariats (active with indigents and low-income people and families in general); apart from agencies such as health surveillance agencies.

A permanent initiative is that of holding “Municipal Hunger Censuses” for each municipality to record the population that is facing hunger or is vulnerable to it. This could be done with the support from local health care and social work agencies, for example.

### *Local programs for metropolitan regions*

#### *a) Subsidized restaurants for the low-income population (restaurantes populares)*

Most Brazilians who work in metropolitan areas have at least one of their meals out of their homes, usually their lunch, and need to rely on the availability, quality and low prices charged in these restaurants.

A program of subsidized restaurants is proposed to serve meals at cost price with the aim of meeting a huge demand of

low-income workers who today eat out without satisfying their nutritional needs appropriately.

Surveys show that a meal in these restaurants could cost R\$ 1.80, considering all variable and labor costs, as observed in a restaurant of this kind in the city of Belo Horizonte. This calculation does not include the costs of setting up the restaurants, rent costs, renovation costs or other local expenses that could be borne by the government. If expenses with staff and infrastructure maintenance are borne by city halls, state governments or charities, as is the case today, the cost of a meal could be close to R\$ 1.00.

*b) Food Bank*

Donating food to charities and low-income populations that would otherwise be wasted involves proposals ranging from collection to distribution of food products. The Zero Hunger Project endorses the proposal to institutionalize the Good Samaritan Charter (*Estatuto do Bom Samaritano*), which is under discussion at the National Congress. The Good Samaritan Charter facilitates the donation of food products by eliminating red tape from the process, reducing costs, and removing undue responsibilities. The application of this new law is expected to lead to a significant increase in food products made available to charities for them to feed low-income population groups.

*c) Modernization of food supply facilities*

Facilities such as small grocery outlets of different kinds and community food purchase arrangements should be used as a feasible alternative to lower food prices in urban areas, whether metropolitan or not.

For these policies to be feasible, setting up central food purchase and distribution facilities in the outskirts of metropolitan regions should also be encouraged to provide logistical and marketing support to the operation of concessionaires and small retailers. As a counterpart, these would, in turn, have to sell items of the basic set of food products consumed by the population and also other food items at cheaper prices.

*d) New relationship with supermarket chains*

A new policy for the supply sector also requires a new relationship with supermarket chains to avoid excessive concentration in the retail and turn them into partners of a food security policy.

This partnership with supermarkets is fundamental for implementing a food security policy in municipalities today, since that is where low-income populations buy their food mostly. Programs such as the Food Stamp program tend to generate positive results for these agents, as they make it possible for them to increase their clientele. The retail network is also fundamental for marketing agricultural and agroindustrial products produced in localities to be supported through agrarian reform and family farming development programs.

*Local proposals for non-metropolitan urban areas (small and medium-sized cities)*

*a) Food Bank*

Food Banks for the population vulnerable to hunger in small and medium-sized cities should be operated in a similar way as in metropolitan regions. However, since the scale of their operations is smaller, it might be possible to deliver products with some processing, paying greater attention to the appearance and quality of the food products. It should be recalled that, in this case, food donors would also enjoy the advantages contemplated in the Good Samaritan Charter.

*b) Partnership with retailers*

In smaller urban communities, it is also important to involve local retailers to avoid excessive concentration, provided that they can charge low prices and ensure the quality of the products they sell. This is perfectly feasible if investments are made in distribution facilities and logistics.

The proposal of the Zero Hunger Project is one of promoting a partnership among groups of retailers (including market traders, grocery stores and small outlets) and local public authorities to jointly establish a procurement system. Public authorities would set a ceiling for the prices to be charged for items included in the basic set of food products consumed by the population and would control the profit margin of small retailers to some extent.

*c) Modernization of food supply facilities*

In non-metropolitan urban areas (small and medium-sized cities), the presence of public authorities in the supply sector could be more dynamic through actions designed to encourage a direct connection between consumers and local farmers. Public authorities would organize and encourage consumption and distribution

campaigns to promote the sales of regionally produced food, such as “farmers’ fairs,” for example.

Because of the action of large intermediary networks, it is very common to see in natura products being transported over long distances and whole regions supplied by food items brought from distant areas. The same can be said of industrialized products such as milk, dairy products and meat. For this reason, closer relations between farmers and consumers in the same region should be encouraged, creating local bonds and reinforcing the tastes and flavors established in a certain environment.

#### *d) Urban agriculture*

The connection between local agricultural food supply and production needs be more appreciated in small and medium-sized municipalities.

Various municipal initiatives can stimulate programs such as “Farmers’ Fairs” and home delivery of fresh food products; training courses for establishing vegetable gardens in schools; registration of idle urban plots for using them to establish vegetable gardens, allowing them to be used free-of-charge for producing food, for a certain time, by interested unemployed people; and charging of differentiated property tax rates on plots used for this purpose.

### *Policies for rural areas*

#### *a) Support to family farming*

The Zero Hunger Project proposes that city halls, state governments and the federal administration should use, whenever possible, their purchasing power derived from institutional demand to buy food items used in meals served in schools, day-care centers, hospitals, forts, low-cost restaurants, etc. from family farmers.

In parallel to these initiatives, other actions are necessary for the objectives of reducing costs and improving the quality of food products to be achieved:

- Technical assistance, which is usually neglected by public administrations, is an element to be strengthened.
- Access to credit: it is necessary to redefine the National Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming (Pronaf) for it to truly assist less capitalized farmers. In parallel, state and municipal governments should support microcredit associations by creating guarantee funds.

- Marketing support by, for example, intermediating contacts with companies interested in buying regional products from small farmers or “clean” production schemes or making spaces available in traditional supply facilities already available in cities (fairs and small grocery outlets).
- Infrastructure: this is a traditional area of action of municipal administrations, although clear priority is not always attached to small farmers in investments. Building bridges, rural roads, ponds, storage facilities and providing support to the purchase of trucks are possible actions to be taken using municipal facilities and resources, at a low cost. This is an important strategy to increase the supply of jobs in rural areas.

*b) Support to production for self-consumption*

The tool that is used is that of donations by city halls or state governments of seeds and specific inputs and tools for use in vegetable gardens, as well as of breeders for raising small animals (bees, rabbits, poultry, goats, etc.).

The city halls should also stimulate the use of vacant lots for food production purposes through programs such as community vegetable gardens, as well as the individual or collective marketing of the resulting products in “farmers’ fairs,” as already mentioned.

## ORIGIN OF THE RESOURCES

Ensuring a budget of their own at federal level to the policies mentioned in this document, as well to education, health care, and land regularization policies, among others, is deemed necessary, given the vulnerability of the system currently in force and the fact that certain budget allocations require full or partial financial reprogramming in compliance with public guidelines to cut down public spending and that fund allocations are insufficient at the moment.

Today, except for spending with education and agrarian reform, other social expenses (social security, health care and social work) are included in the social security budget, the main fund sources of which are contributions to the National Social Security Institute, contributions on the net profit of legal persons, contributions to the Social Integration Program (PIS/Pasep), contributions to social secu-

rity financing (Cofins) and the Provisional Contribution on Financial Transactions (CPMF). The 2002 budget bill, which is already under analysis at the National Congress, sets apart R\$ 164.8 billion for the Social Security budget, including about R\$ 4.2 billion for the Social Work Fund, which ensures funds to programs intended to assist elderly people, poor children, and physically disabled people.

If we discuss funding sources for the policies proposed in the Zero Hunger Project under the current scenario of restricted public spending, we will end up having to look for new funding sources or to reallocate existing revenues. However, the social spending (except with social security) of different social programs currently under way amounts to about R\$ 45 billion a year, more than double the amount required to implement the proposed Food Stamp Program.

It is therefore possible to both reallocate part of the existing budget and secure additional resources resulting from a faster economic growth pace, from lower interest rates, from servicing the public debt, and from a better management of available resources by reducing the wastefulness and corruption that exist today.

The recently created Poverty Combat Fund, estimated at about R\$ 4 billion a year, is one of these new sources of funds that could be reallocated to finance the programs proposed here.

Donations from companies and natural individuals are another source that could also be appropriately reallocated through partnerships between government and civil society with the aim of ensuring greater impacts on reducing hunger and poverty. Incentives could be created to stimulate these donations, such as income tax deductions, as is done by the Municipal Fund for the Rights of Children and Adolescents of São Paulo. Another path is that of “social marketing,” as through < [www.clickfome.com.br](http://www.clickfome.com.br) >, an initiative of the Citizenship Action – Rio Committee, a website where registered companies donate basic food baskets at each click, and initiatives taken by the Ethos Institute, the Abrinq Foundation, and Gife (Corporate Studies and Foundations Group) of the American Chamber of Commerce, which encourage social actions.

## INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The preliminary version of the Zero Hunger Project included a proposal to create an Extraordinary Ministry to link up the vari-

ous policies against hunger under the responsibility of different governmental agencies (federal, state and municipal agencies), as well as actions of civil society organizations.

The suggestions collected during public discussions of this preliminary version of the project pointed out the need for two key changes in the institutional framework that was initially proposed:

a) because actions against hunger should be part of a permanent food security policy, setting up a non-temporary institutional framework, such as an extraordinary ministry, would be necessary;

b) given the complexity involved in establishing links with civil society and with the government apparatus itself, the coordinating role of a food security policy must be directly linked to the Presidency of the Republic, or else it will just become another governmental policy of limited reach of the ministry in charge of implementing it.

Recovering the previous experience of Consea was suggested as the best path to be followed, and this proposal was endorsed by the Zero Hunger Project.

Consea was a new approach in terms of governability mechanisms in Brazil: representatives of the highest-ranking levels of the federal administration and civil society discussed proposals that could speed up the process of eradicating poverty and extreme poverty from the country. Proposals for innovative public policies were created and/or made feasible, such as: decentralization of the National School Meal Program and of the National Job and Income Generation Program, transparency in the management of public funds, and creation of the Food Distribution Program (Prodea) as a mechanism for using public food stocks about to be lost. The management mechanisms that were implemented in this process were even more innovative, such as the creation of multiple joint (civil society/government) working groups, which ended up consolidating a new shared management practice and culture for public policies.

One of the main limitations of Consea, however, was that, as defined by the government, decisions on the economic policy continued to be made outside the circles in which its impacts on food security, hunger and extreme poverty were discussed, that is, the joint work involved only ministries in charge of addressing social issues and Consea was reduced to just another pressure mechanism to ensure funds for financing social policies and programs.

Therefore, the decision to attach top priority to fighting hunger and extreme poverty was not made by economic agencies, which continued to follow the models proposed by international financial organizations, regardless of their possible impact in terms of enhancing social exclusion, hunger and undernutrition.

It was recommended that the decisions made within Consea and signed off by the President of the Republic should be implemented under the coordination of an authority with a government mandate. In this case, it was suggested that this work should be carried out by the Ministry of Planning in coordination with the all other ministries and governmental agencies.

Considering that government members and representatives of non-governmental organizations have different roles to play in

### Summary of cost estimates and fund sources for specific programs of the Zero Hunger Project

| Programs                                      | Implementation                              | Beneficiary audience (thousand people) | Total annual cost in R\$ thousand (year) | Source of Funds                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Incentives to production for self-consumption | Federal, Municipal                          | 6,370                                  | (a)                                      | Agricultural Policy Programs and municipal resources                                  |
| Food Stamp                                    | Federal, State, Municipal and civil society | 44,043                                 | 19,961,242                               | Treasury, Poverty Combat Fund and Social Work Fund                                    |
| Emergency food basket                         | Federal, State, Municipal and civil society | Not estimated                          | (b)                                      | Treasury, Poverty Combat Fund and Social Work Fund                                    |
| Fighting child and mother undernutrition      | Federal, Municipal                          | 2,507                                  | (a)                                      | Health Care Budget and City Halls                                                     |
| Food security and quality                     | Federal, State, Municipal and civil society | All the population                     | (a)                                      | Health Care Budget, Budget of the Ministry of Agriculture and private support         |
| Food Education                                | Federal, State, Municipal and civil society | All the population                     | (a)                                      | Education and Health Care Budget at the three governmental levels and private support |

Source: Special Tabulations of the 1999 National Household Sample Survey and 1996 Population Count – IBGE.

(a) Data not available, as the costs are contemplated in the budgets of the respective governmental spheres.

(b) Costs included in the Food Stamp Program.

Note: People and families can be assisted by more than one program. Therefore, the figures of this table should not be totaled.

the Council, it would be important to establish two executive secretariats. The first one would promote links between different governmental agencies, while the other would take care of the dialogue with non-governmental organizations. This proposal of a partnership between government and civil society would allow for management to be shared with grassroots participation and pave the way for meeting the demands of various grassroots organizations.



## 2. TO THE CRITICS OF THE ZERO HUNGER PROGRAM<sup>1</sup>

*José Graziano da Silva<sup>2</sup>*

*Walter Belik*

*Maya Takagi*

The aim of the Zero Hunger Project, which was presented on the last World Food Day (October 16, 2001), is to propose a participatory national policy for promoting food security and fighting hunger. Its preparation involved some of the main experts in the topic, besides social movements and NGOs, in different seminars and debates that were held over a period of one year.

This project has been recognized by national and international organizations as a major initiative of civil society, as it proposes concrete alternatives to fight the scourge of hunger in the country.

As opposed to data disseminated by technical experts linked to the federal government, it was shown that poverty levels and vulnerability to hunger increased between 1995 and 1999, particularly in metropolitan areas, mainly as a result of unemployment and low wage levels. Therefore, although poverty is strongly concentrated in Brazil's northeast region (50 % of the poor live in states located in this region), it has grown in almost all metropolitan regions (at a rate of 5 % a year in the 1995-1999 period) and even more in Greater São Paulo (9.2 % a year) and in the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre (7.8 % a year)<sup>3</sup>.

According to basic data of the 1999 National Household Sample Survey carried out by IBGE, we estimated that there are 44 million very poor people earning less than one dollar a day in Brazil, accounting for 9.3 million households with an income of about R\$ 180.00 per family/month which were identified as the potential beneficiary audience of the project's proposals.

1. Text submitted by the Citizenship Institute in November 2001.

2. Technical coordinators of the Zero Hunger Project.

3. According to DEL GROSSI, GRAZIANO DA SILVA and TAKAGI (2001).

It was also seen that:

a) Today, the hunger problem is not caused by insufficient food production, but rather by the lack of income to buy food on an on-going basis in sufficient quantity and quality. Estimates of the FAO – United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture – show that Brazil has a per capita availability of food equivalent to 2,960 kcal/day, very much above the recommended minimum of 1,900 kcal. The problem is that food consumption is limited by the household income; and because income distribution is very unequal, a high percentage of the population has no access to food products not even in the necessary quantity to ensure survival. There is a high percentage of malnourished people consuming an average 1,650 kcal/person/day in Brazil today, for which reason we have been classified by the FAO under category 3 (on a scale of 1 to 5 for increasing percentages of malnourished people), together with countries such as Nigeria, Paraguay and Colombia.

b) there is a vicious circle of hunger which is difficult to be tackled through compensatory policies based on food donations alone, as has been the case traditionally (donations of food baskets, for example). This circle is fed, on the one hand, by Brazil's structural problems such as lack of jobs, low wages and income concentration and, on the other hand, by the lack of agricultural policies and food price hikes.

In this scenario, it was seen that food policies were dismantled over the 1990s and that there was not a single program in the country contemplating direct actions against hunger. Existing policies are fragmented into different actions that are predominantly local in nature and fundamentally based on transfers of small amounts ("alms grant") that are insufficient to change the country's scenario of extreme poverty and undernutrition. Different programs launched by the federal government are examples of this fact: drought programs, the school grant program, child labor eradication programs, the income grant (*Bolsa Renda*) program, the Food Grant program.

According to the Zero Hunger Project, the hunger problem in Brazil has three fundamental dimensions: on the one hand, insufficient demand, resulting from income concentration, high unemployment and underemployment levels, and the low purchasing power of the wages paid to the majority of the working class; on the other hand, inconsistency between current food prices and the low purchasing power of the majority of the population; and third but not

less important: the hunger experienced by poor people excluded from the food market, including many unemployed or underemployed workers, elderly people, children and other poor groups in need of emergency assistance.

For these reasons, the Zero Hunger proposal involves three main simultaneous action lines: expansion of the actual demand for food, measures to lower food prices, and emergency programs to assist the percentage of the population excluded from the market. Ultimately, however, the hunger problem in Brazil will only be eliminated for good if a new economic development model is adopted to promote growth with income distribution, so that the domestic market can be recovered with job generation, higher wages, and recovery of the purchasing power of the minimum wage, which is sort of a “headlight” for the income of the poorest population segments.

Understanding that a country’s food security requires more than overcoming poverty and hunger is a must. It is difficult to interrupt the vicious circle that connects poverty to hunger only through compensatory policies based on donations of basic food baskets or cash transfers, such as minimum income programs and the *Bolsa Escola* program, as has been the case for some years now. It is necessary to combine the goal of the food security policy with economic and social development strategies capable of ensuring equity and social inclusion.

Some policies can be helpful for this purpose, such as expanded and reinforced minimum income programs and the *Bolsa Escola* program, incentives to family farming, a universal Social Security System, intensification of the agrarian reform program, and a growth policy that makes it possible for more and better jobs to be generated. But we must also have specific policies to fight hunger, such as a food stamp program that can replace the donation of basic food baskets, a program against mother-child undernutrition, an expanded school meal program and PAT – Workers’ Food Program, among other initiatives. Finally, it is necessary to devise differentiated local policies according to the location of needy populations. In rural areas, for example, food production should be supported, even if only for self-consumption. In metropolises, in turn, it is necessary to expand the coverage of subsidized restaurants and food banks and to promote partnerships with retailers for marketing seasonal products and stimulate the consumption of regionally-grown food.

Despite the fact that it is being built in an ongoing and participatory manner, the project has been criticized on many occasions for two main reasons: unawareness of its contents in the style of “I never read it, but I don’t like it,” as many criticisms were based on clearly biased newspaper headlines; and political motivations, with the aim of criticizing the main inspirer of the project, Lula.

Despite these attempts to reject it, we believe that the project has reached its objectives. First, we managed to get the hunger problem (and that of the lack of policies to fight it) back on the national agenda. The project had a large impact on the news and made it possible to once again begin to mobilize society around the topic. Second, the federal government was forced, also by public opinion, to respond to society and to the population facing hunger. As a result, programs such as the minimum income program were expanded for the population in the 15-60 age bracket, which would have been excluded from federal cash transfer programs, and the Poverty Combat Fund, defended by collaborators as the main source of funds to finance actions against hunger, was approved one day after the launch of the Zero Hunger Project. Finally, and not less important, the project was widely accepted, as dozens of invitations were made for it to be launched in different places and to be discussed publicly. Some city halls, such as those of Santo André, Campinas and Embu in the state of São Paulo and of Ponta Grossa in the state of Paraná, were already consolidating initiatives to implement part of the proposals contained in the Zero Hunger Project.

The objective of this article is to document the main aspects that were questioned after the Zero Hunger Project was launched, with the aim of defining elements to continue with the debate. Four topics will be addressed: 1) policies against hunger and poverty; 2) the methodology that was adopted; 3) the “costs” of the project; 4) the false dichotomy between food stamps and minimum income.

## POLICIES AGAINST HUNGER AND POVERTY

What policies are being adopted today to fight hunger and poverty in Brazil?

A watershed has become quite clear. On the one hand, some people say that there are sufficient resources and policies today and that the problem lies in “focusing more on the poor.” According to

the supporters of this idea, the resources allocated to social programs are not truly being used to assist those who need them in an efficient way. This is why various policies (such as, for example, milk and food basket distribution policies) were replaced by an income complementation policy. This is the underlying idea behind the policies adopted by the current government, which is defended by researchers linked to Ipea and the World Bank.

It is completely different from the proposal of the Zero Hunger Project, as we already pointed out. The Zero Hunger Project proposes specific food aid policies combined with structural policies such as job and income generation policies, agrarian reform, policies in support of family farming, increases in the minimum wage and expansion of the social security system, for example. According to its supporters, direct food security and hunger eradication policies should be adopted to provide the basic means for the subsistence of low-income families while creating dynamic mechanisms in other areas of the economy, such as food production and distribution mechanisms that would also be used to educate people with a view to doing away with their dependence on these specific policies.

In our opinion, adopting only emergency or assistential policies without considering the structural causes of hunger and extreme poverty, such as unemployment, low income and an extremely high income concentration, will only perpetuate the problem and the need for these assistential policies.

A policy of this magnitude, which is necessary for many Brazilians to rise above the level of subcitizenship, needs resources indeed, as this proposal affects all people and makes the economy and food production chains more dynamic while making food available to people without inflationary impacts.

Although it requires a specific policy, the fight against hunger should not be based on “saving” actions. In all countries whose cases were presented at an international seminar held at the University of Campinas (Unicamp) last April – Canada, United States and Mexico –, policies against hunger are part of a broader set of tools that make up a social safety net and address a wide range of situations of vulnerability, based on the notion that hunger is only one of the many elements of the insecurity faced by poor families. This set of tools reminds us of an “onion”: several layers of social security overlap to

fight poverty: unemployment insurance, social security by age, the *Bolsa Escola* program to ensure that all children attend school, free-of-charge health care, etc.

## THE METHODOLOGY

Another criticism against the Zero Hunger Project is that it allegedly “miscalculated” the number of poor people in Brazil. When we began our activities, we saw that no consensual statistics were available in Brazil on the number of people “facing hunger.”

Given the absence of more recent direct surveys<sup>4</sup> covering all the national territory, different researchers have tried to infer the number of people included in the low-income population through indirect calculation methods, mainly using the income for this purpose. Based on the most recent surveys,<sup>5</sup> we saw that there is no common estimate even when it is based on the same data source and on similar methods. Their discrepant results are attributed to differences in the criteria that were adopted to arrive at a definition of the indigent and poor population.

This explains the many different numbers calculated by different sources: 30 million, according to the *Hunger Map* of 1993; 50 million, according to the figures calculated by the Getúlio Vargas Foundation (FGV)<sup>6</sup>; 54 million, according to the last study carried out by the Applied Research Institute (Ipea); or 44 million, according to the Zero Hunger Program. What is the correct figure? All and none of them, as they depend on the criteria adopted in each survey.

In the Zero Hunger Project, an effort was made to improve the existing methodologies. For this purpose, we prepared two methodological texts and posted them on the website of Unicamp’s Economics Institute<sup>7</sup>, where we provide a step-by-step explanation of how we defined the poverty line, making it clear that we didn’t use

4. The most recent credible surveys include those of Monteiro (1995 and 1997), which measured the percentage of malnourished children and the percentage of adults with low energy reserves in the population.

5. PELIANO, 1993; HOFFMANN, 1995 and 2001; WORLD BANK, 2000; ROCKS, 1996, 1997, 2000a and 2000b; ECLAC, 1989; FERREIRA, LANJOUW and NÉRI, 2000; CAMARGO and FERREIRA, 2001; ÁRIAS, 1999a and 1999b; GARCIA, 2001. See, in this regard, TAKAGI, GRAZIANO DA SILVA and DEL GROSSI, 2001.

6. See *Mapa do fim da fome*. Available at: <<http://cps.fgv.br/renda-bem-estar/pobreza-desigualdade>>. Accessed on: October 4, 2010.

7. TAKAGI, GRAZIANO DA SILVA and DEL GROSSI, 2001; and DEL GROSSI, GRAZIANO DA SILVA and TAKAGI, 2001 (download from the website <[www.eco.unicamp.br](http://www.eco.unicamp.br)>).

the same methodology used by the World Bank; we only borrowed the notion of the “dividing line” of one dollar a day to define the poverty line in rural areas of the northeast region, Brazil’s poorest region. However, we did not adopt the fictitious currency of the PPP dollar (purchasing power parity dollar) of the World Bank to define the poverty line, but rather the average rate of the commercial dollar in September on the reference date of the 1999 National Household Sample Survey. It should be mentioned that the PPP is a theoretical equivalence indicator established to compare the GDP of different countries and not to make international poverty comparisons<sup>8</sup>.

Actually, the researchers involved in the Zero Hunger Project sought to adopt a methodology that would allow for the two main limitations mentioned by the World Bank itself to be corrected. The first one refers to fact that a single poverty line does not consider regional differences in terms of cost of living between urban and rural areas and between regions in the same country. The second one is that the consumption of goods produced by the family itself, such as production for self-consumption, is not considered. These two corrections were made in the Zero Hunger Project using data of the PPV (Living Standards Survey) and of the National Household Sample Survey, both of which are carried out by IBGE.

A third methodological improvement in the figures calculated by the Zero Hunger Project was the deduction of the item with the greatest weight in the household budget, namely, rent or real estate installment payments, avoiding the distortion of considering that the whole household income would be available to buy consumer goods. This adjustment is particularly important, considering that rent and real estate installment payments are proportionally higher in metropolitan areas than in small and medium-sized cities and rural areas.

With all these corrections, we arrived at a surprising figure: the average weighted poverty line for Brazil (R\$ 68.48 by person) indicates the existence of 44 million people with an average available income of R\$ 38.34 per person or 9.3 million families (with 4.7 people in average) with a household income of R\$ 181.10, that is, families with an available income close to the minimum wage in September 1999, the reference date of the National Household Sample Survey,

8. A note of the World Bank itself (World Development Indicators, 2000, p. 65) points out that “PPP rates were designed not for making international poverty comparisons but for comparing aggregates from national accounts. As a result there is no certainty that an international poverty line measures the same degree of need or deprivation across countries” (WORLD BANK, 2000).

were considered poor. We can say, without any doubt, that the income of the people who make up these families is not sufficient to ensure their food security!

## THE “COSTS” OF THE PROJECT

Another criticism was that the project did not provide a clear indication of the sources of its funds. Apart from this, the costs of the project were inflated, as it was reported that they would imply a total cost of R\$ 70 billion (6 % of GDP), which would lead Brazil to bankruptcy in 15 days, according to the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* on October 21, 2001. The mistake made in connection with this figure is evident: the critics of the Zero Hunger Project added all the costs involved in fighting hunger over many years as if all of them were to be borne at the same time, apart from overestimating the figures.

Our estimates show that the food stamp program alone would cost about R\$ 20 billion if it covered all the “current stock” of 9.3 million very poor families in a single year – about 44 million people. Since the idea is to implement the program over a four-year period, the average annual cost would be in the order of R\$ 11 billion, if we consider a 50 % concomitant reduction in poverty levels over a period of ten years.

In addition, the estimates of the alleged devastating effects of raising the minimum wage to US\$ 100 are unfounded, as well as of extending the benefits currently ensured by the social security system to people falling under the household economy regime to non-agricultural families as well. Based on microdata of the 1999 National Household Sample Survey, our calculations indicated the existence of a “stock” of 2.9 million people at retirement age (women over 60 years old and men above the age of 65) who are not receiving any benefit from public agencies. Even if all this “stock” were contemplated in the first year (which is not what the project is proposing), the costs involved would amount to R\$ 6.8 billion. This figure represents approximately only 0.7 % of GDP or 3.3 % of all contributions collected by the social security system in 2000. After the incorporation of this “stock,” the annual flow balance (people who retire less those who die and lose the benefit) would not be much higher than the increase we already experience today.

As for the criticism that raising the minimum wage to US\$ 100 would lead Brazil to bankruptcy, we must say that this raise was already approved in 1995 to remain in force until January 1999.

It significantly improved poverty indicators in the era of the real (the Brazilian currency), and although this improvement was attributed to monetary stabilization, it actually resulted from gains in the minimum wage. In this regard, the figures presented in the above-mentioned article published in the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* are swollen, as the monthly contributions to the social security system (*benefícios de prestação continuada*) that are based on the minimum wage do not ensure retirement pensions to all the 20 million people who contribute to the system today, but only to 13 million people. Therefore, the impact of raising the minimum wage to one hundred dollars on 16 million people (the current 13 million plus 3 million informal workers, as proposed by the Zero Hunger Project) would amount to R\$ 11 billion if all of them were covered in a single year. These figures are much lower than the R\$ 70 billion or 6 % of GDP mentioned in the front cover article of the newspaper *O Estado*, which would allegedly lead Brazil to bankruptcy in 15 days<sup>9</sup>.

But the main point of controversy is that the expenses of the Zero Hunger Project should not be considered without taking into account its benefits for Brazil, that is, the positive effects of fighting hunger and extreme poverty. These effects include, for example, a relief for the health care budget and also the benefits afforded by an increase in the area cultivated with food crops in terms of job generation and a higher tax revenue. Our simulations show, for example, that the food stamp program could generate a counterpart of about R\$ 2.5 billion a year in additional tax revenue (Turnover Tax - ICMS) and PIS (Social Integration Program (PIS))/Contribution to social security financing (cofins) if these 44 million poor people became consumers<sup>10</sup>.

If we consider an additional average calorie and protein intake of 50 % resulting from the distribution of food stamps to poor families, the current rice and bean production would increase by over 30 %. This would lead to an increase of 3 million hectares in

9. It should be mentioned that of the full contributions collected by the social security system (about R\$ 200 billion in 2000), 20% are untied funds that are used for "fiscal stability" purposes.

10. This calculation was based on an estimated tax load on the basic set of food products of 14.1% in average in Brazil's metropolitan regions, according to data of the 1996 POF (Consumer Expenditure Survey). This tax load is underestimated, since it only considers items included in the basic set of food products consumed by the population, which, in some states, are subject to lower tax rates, and metropolitan regions are also the ones that grant more fiscal benefits. See MAGALHAES, 2001.

the cultivated area, generating over 350,000 jobs in family farming and increasing the current value of agricultural production by about R\$ 5 billion, more or less half the annual cost of the food stamps contemplated in the Zero Hunger Project. All of these aspects were “forgotten” by the critics of the Zero Hunger Project, who only added its costs and failed to understand that fighting hunger and extreme poverty is also a form of investment.

But let us suppose that none of these demand-expanding mechanisms proposed in the Zero Hunger Project worked, that is, that no results were achieved in terms of growth or poverty reduction. Where would the funds to implement the proposed programs come from?

We say in the Zero Hunger Project that it is possible to relocate part of the R\$ 45 billion available today in the budget for social spending (except social security), freeing R\$ 1,000 a year for each poor person included in our calculations. And we give a solid example: the Poverty Combat Fund, estimated at about R\$ 4 billion available a year. Well, the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* itself said on October 16, 2001 that the federal government will earmark one-third of the R\$ 3.1 billion contemplated this year for the Fund for Combating and Eradicating Poverty to reinforce fiscal adjustments. In addition, according to data disseminated by Unafisco (National Union of Federal Revenue Tax Auditors) recently, Brazil loses about R\$ 4 billion a year as a result of various tax exemptions granted, for example, to banking companies and beverage and cigarette manufacturers. This shows that ensuring the availability of funds to fight hunger and extreme poverty is, above all, a political priority issue.

This is the priority that we expect to secure through a commitment of governors to relocate part of the revenue from indirect taxes on items included in the basic set of food products consumed by the population to fighting hunger. Our estimates suggest that these revenues amount to R\$ 9.7 billion a year today, or 0.8 % of GDP. According to the states, these revenues vary from 0.8 % (state of São Paulo) to 3.1 % (state of Ceará) of the total tax revenue. The Zero Hunger Project proposes that governors should return part of these resources to the poorer population.

Actually, the critics of the project are only concerned with asking what will be the cost of the Zero Hunger Project and where the funds to finance it will come from; but the question should be an-

other one: what is the cost of not fighting hunger? The lack of job-generating, health care and education policies have a high cost for Brazil, where violence is on the rise. There is also the cost of low consumption and production of goods, costs for employers and many other costs. For this reason, fighting hunger should not be merely seen as a “cost,” but also as an investment in Brazil.

## FOOD STAMPS AND MINIMUM INCOME

This is another false debate, based on a false dichotomy between the minimum income and food stamps. It is considered that cash transfers alone are not enough to put an end to hunger, given the magnitude of the problem in Brazil today. In addition, programs such as the minimum income program are aimed at assisting very low-income families that cannot meet their basic needs, which involve more elements than their food needs. For this reason, a set of proposals is presented comprising policies designed to address issues ranging from promoting a better income distribution to increasing food supply and lowering food costs.

It is worthwhile to insist on this point: the food stamp program is a complementary program, as it has been in all countries where was implemented, since it is based on the idea of subsidizing the income of poorer households up to an amount that can ensure that they will have the means to feed themselves appropriately. It is believed that the advantages it affords are the following ones: a) higher spending with food by families in relation to programs meant to complement their income in cash; b) its countercyclical and non-inflationary nature, as it links a higher food consumption to food production; c) it allows city halls to recover institutional procurement policies; d) its complementary character, which allows it to be temporary and combined with other programs such as the School Grant and the Food Grant programs and with mechanisms such as unemployment insurance, social security schemes, professional training programs, health care and undernutrition prevention programs, etc.

All of these elements point to the fact that the debate and mobilization around the preparation of the Zero Hunger Project should be ongoing and comprehensive, as has been the case so far. Its implementation is not only feasible, but also necessary and urgent for the country.

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### 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ZERO HUNGER PROGRAM IN 2003<sup>1</sup>

Maya Takagi

#### THE INITIAL DESIGN

Late in 2002, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, then President-elect of Brazil, said that fighting hunger would be one of the top priorities of his administration. After his first speech as president-elect, he said: “If at the end of my mandate every Brazilian can eat three times a day, I will have fulfilled my life’s mission” (victory speech of the president-elect on October 20, 2002).

This statement had a huge impact on the national media and marked the beginning of what later on was referred to as “superexposure” of the project<sup>2</sup>. It marked the beginning of the implementation of the Zero Hunger Program by the federal administration as a public policy.

For the government transition team, the institutional design of the Program contemplated the following actions:

- Reestablishment of Consea as an agency in charge of advising the President of the Republic,
- Creation of an Extraordinary Ministry for Food Security (Mesa) and Hunger Combat linked to the Presidency of the Republic in charge of drawing up and implementing food security policies.
- Comprehensive grassroots mobilization process, including the creation of a special advisory unit within the premises of the Presidency of the Republic to take care of it.
- Use of the physical framework, staff and budget of the Executive Secretariat of the Community Solidarity Program, which was also linked to the Presidency of the Republic.

1. Texts extracted from chapter 2 of the doctor’s degree thesis of Maya Takagi (2006).

2. All the mainstream media gave prominence to the statement of the President-elect: “Investindo contra a fome: Lula anuncia prioridade do governo e Secretaria de Emergência Social” (*O Globo* newspaper, October 29, 2002); “Combate à fome em primeiro lugar” (*Correio Brasileiro* newspaper, October 29, 2002); “Lula prioriza fome, descarta mágica e acena ao mercado” (*Folha de São Paulo* newspaper, October 29, 2002); “Discurso define combate à fome como prioridade” (*Valor* magazine, October 29, 2002); “Lula prioriza combate à fome” (*Jornal do Brasil* newspaper, October 29, 2002).

- Adjustments in the 2003 Budget Bill with the aim of allocating R\$ 1.8 billion of the funds contemplated in it to actions of the Program in 2003.

Three new actions were included in the 2003 Annual Budget Law (LOA), for which R\$ 1.8 billion from the Secretariat of the Community Solidarity Program were added:

- a) Financial assistance to families to complement their income for buying food products – Zero Hunger. In practice, this action consisted in the implementation of the Food Card Program. This action ended up absorbing most of the funds: R\$ 1.2 billion.
- b) Allocation of funds for procuring food items from family farmers, known as PAA – Family Farming Food Acquisition Program: R\$ 400 million.
- c) Actions related to food education and for improving the socio-economic status of families, which included other actions contemplated in the Zero Hunger Program and to which R\$ 200 million were allocated.

This third action included food education programs and municipal food security programs such as those designed to implement subsidized restaurants and food banks and to build cisterns in the Brazilian northeastern semiarid region, which was one of the program's structuring actions in its first year.

The program for procuring food from family farmer was one of the main proposals that social movements<sup>3</sup> active in rural areas submitted to the government transition team, and it was the one for which most funds allocated to the program were earmarked.

A substantial funds were earmarked for it in relation to those allocated to other ministries, particularly considering that these funds were earmarked for an Extraordinary Ministry. In the Secretariat of the Community Solidarity Program, which was the institutional headquarters of the new ministry, the initial budget amounted to only R\$ 12.5 million. The total budget of other agencies dealing with nutrition-related issues, such as the General Coordinating Board of the Food and Nutrition Policy of the Ministry of Health, which was in charge of managing the Food Grant program and food education

3. It was claimed by the Small Farmers Movement and by the Landless Movement.

programs, amounted to R\$ 7 million. The total budget allocated to Mesa was therefore higher than the ones allocated to the majority of the other ministries, second only to the budgets of the ministries of Health and of Education. In addition, this budget would not to be subject to any financial reprogramming.

Apart from this earmarking, other changes were made to secure the largest amount of funds for the Zero Hunger Program from the Fund for Combating and Eradicating Poverty. A more organized use of its funds was considered by the government transition team as a powerful tool to ensure funds for the government's top declared priority, namely, fighting hunger.

Therefore, the agency in charge of managing the Fund for Combating and Eradicating Poverty was transferred from the Ministry of Planning, which did not play a prominent role in defining priorities before 2003, to Mesa, with the aim of ensuring a better coordination of social actions with the resources available.

Another initiative that was consolidated during this period was that of taking private and individual donations for "President Lula's fight against hunger" through the Fund for Combating Poverty. This was a new institutional development, as it was seen that even without campaigns people wanted to contribute spontaneously to the President's priority and the easiest way to do this was by taking donations in cash. But the government had no legal instruments back then to take these donations and make sure that they would be used for their intended purposes.

All of these actions made it possible to implement the Program in the first year and to set up a base for its operation in the years that followed. In parallel to the definition of this institutional design, the first actions to be implemented by the Zero Hunger Program of the federal administration were also defined by the government transition team (*see BOX 1*).

The main idea behind the creation of the Extraordinary Ministry was that, in order to tackle the hunger problem, a set of policies should be simultaneously implemented by different federal governmental agencies, apart from new policies that had not been executed by any agency until then. These specific policies were virtually the same ones defined in the original project of the Citizenship Institute. However, they would now be organized according to their executing agencies. The recently-created Ministry would be

in charge of coordinating the following policies that had not been adopted until then (at least at national level):

Food Card Program; food security stocks; support to food self-consumption; food education; incentives to agricultural and agroindustrial production and marketing of the produce of family farmers; incentives to local policies such as setting up subsidized restaurants for the low-income population; food bank; direct marketing channels; institutional food procurement – for hospitals, day-care centers, schools, penitentiaries.

### BOX 1: Initial design of the Zero Hunger Program – Priorities for 2003

#### **Structural Programs**

##### 1) Agrarian Reform:

- Preparation of the National Agrarian Reform Plan (PNRA).
- Emergency settlement plan for 60,000 camped families.
- Recovery of settlements in precarious conditions, benefiting 40,000 families.

##### 2. Strengthening of family farming:

- Expansion of the assistance provided by Pronaf B to 200,000 families.
- Financing to the family farming second crop.

##### 3. Emergency Project for Coexistence with the Semi-arid Region:

- Harvest insurance.
- Emergency water supply.
- Construction of small water supply facilities: cisterns and underground dams.

##### 4. Program Against Illiteracy:

- Pre-literacy courses in municipalities covered by the Zero Hunger Project.
- Agrarian reform education program for young people and adults.

##### 5. Job Generation Program:

- Financing for housing and sanitation.

#### **Specific Programs**

1. Subsidized restaurants for the low-income population.
2. Food Banks.
3. Expansion of the School Meal Program.
4. Emergency Food Card Program.
5. Food Education.

The idea was that, in the initial phase, all of these programs would be integrated into one another at the local level: Food Card, adult literacy courses, food education, incentives to family farming, agrarian reform, job and income generation programs, cistern-building, etc. The proposal preserved the original idea of the Zero Hunger Project of stimulating the circulation of its benefits in the municipality or region, with the aim of generating jobs and fostering food production to overcome the vicious circle of hunger.

According to the team in charge of the Zero Hunger Project, this approach was essentially different from the one adopted in previous cash transfer programs, which had specific purposes, such as the School Grant Program, the objective of which was subsidizing children's education expenses, the Child Labor Eradication Program (Peti), designed to make children attend school, and the Loas, which provides direct assistance to very poor elderly and disabled people.

The Food Card Program, as implemented in the very early stages of the new federal administration, was an idea of the government transition team, which identified about 800 municipalities in the semi-arid region facing declared emergency situations caused by droughts and lack of funds to ensure the continuity of a program intended to provide emergency assistance to families: the *Bolsa Renda* (Income Grant) Program.

The Income Grant Program, managed by the Ministry of National Integration, provided a grant of R\$ 30.00 a month to each registered family in municipalities facing declared emergency situations or calamities for the purpose of providing emergency assistance to family farmers affected by droughts.

However, after Decree n. 3,877 of July 24, 2001 was issued, establishing the compulsory use of a Unified Record for cash transfer programs of the federal administration, the list of families assisted was expanded to include all families registered in it plus those registered in the School Grant Program in municipalities facing emergency situations, regardless of their status (family farmers or not). This expansion doubled the number of beneficiary families in relation to the number of municipalities affected by droughts in previous years.

At the same time that the number of beneficiary families increased twofold in relation to the average, the amount of the benefit was reduced from R\$ 60.00 to R\$ 30.00. In practice, instead of operating as an emergency assistance program to make up for the

lack of income of farmers suffering the effects of a drought, the Income Grant Program became a program to guarantee a minimum income in small municipalities in the semi-arid region. Of the 1,143 municipalities located in the semi-arid region, about 800 declared an emergency late in 2002 due to the effects of a drought.

However, the Income Grant Program was predominantly an emergency and temporary program for which no funds had been earmarked in the 2003 budget. Regardless of the fact that, in practice, the Income Grant Program was leading municipalities to declare emergency situations to be able to enjoy its benefits and that no registration methodology was being used to select families that truly needed its assistance, the reality was that its interruption could harm about 1 million families covered by the program. This would be disastrous in the early stages of a grassroots-oriented government.

Therefore, the first proposal that was evaluated was one of extending the Food Card Program (PCA) to registered families in the semi-arid region that were enjoying the benefits of the Income Grant Program. With the inclusion of new families, the Income Grant Program would be gradually replaced by the PCA as municipal records were updated/checked for their quality and municipalities joined the program with their counterpart. In addition, it was proposed that the Food Grant Program of the Ministry of Health should be expanded in the region.

The Food Card Program would be implemented in partnership with states and municipalities interested in sharing the expenses of a program of this kind. The initial proposal of distributing “food stamps” to registered families for them to buy food items from registered retailers evolved to an approach of using the system of the Unified Record for paying benefits to registered families through Caixa Econômica Federal. This approach reduced the costs of producing the stamps and other cards and of setting up a new system for transferring the grant to the families. The city halls took on the costs of hiring monitors and setting up managing committees. The amount of R\$ 50.00 was estimated by the National Food Supply Company (Conab) as the value of a basic basket of quality food products.

In order to preserve the principle of linking the money to access to food, the pilot proposal of the Card would meet to the following guidelines: linking of expenses to the purchase of food products as confirmed by documents such as invoices, receipts, or other sim-

ple notes to confirm the location where the food was bought before a local Managing Committee; establishment of a Program Managing Committee at the municipal level, made up of members of existing Municipal Councils, such as councils dealing with issues related to Social Work, Health Care, Children and Adolescents, Elderly People and Rural Development, who would be in charge of referring members of the families to literacy courses, professional training, health care stations and schools, as well as to capacity-building community work; implementation of a food education program providing incentives to the consumption of regionally-produced food items, combined with literacy courses for adults.

Apart from the initial design of the Food Card Program in the semi-arid region, the following programs were planned and given priority to: a program to alleviate the effects of droughts by stimulating food production, ensuring water supply and building cisterns; expansion of the school meal program through higher fund transfers to municipalities, provided that they are used to diversify the meals served in schools, preschools and child care facilities; local procurement of the produce of family farmers; integration of the programs into the Social Protection Network (job generation, income transfer, minimum income, microcredit), based on the definition of criteria for the beneficiary audience, strengthening the complementariness element; incentives to Local Programs – subsidized restaurants for the low-income population and food banks – and implementation of the Sisvan – Food and Nutrition Surveillance System – to promote the monitoring of the nutritional status of the population covered by the Unified Health System (SUS) through all the cycles of their lives.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ZERO HUNGER PROGRAM: MAIN ACTION FRONTS

After the proposal was formulated, the first practical step taken by the government to consolidate actions against hunger through a food and nutrition security policy was the issuing of Provisional Measure n. 103 of January 1, 2003, which provides for the organization of the Presidency of the Republic and of the Ministries.

This Provisional Measure, which later on was converted into Law n. 10,683 of May 28, 2003, created Consea and the Office of the Extraordinary Ministry of Food Security and Hunger Combat, as follows:

Art. 1º [...] § 1º The following shall be agencies of the Presidency of the Republic in charge of providing immediate advisory to the President of the Republic: [...]

III – the National Food and Nutrition Security Council; [...]

Art. 9º The National Food and Nutrition Security Council shall be in charge of advising the President of the Republic on the formulation of policies and definition of guidelines for the government to ensure the human right to food, particularly on integrating governmental actions with the aim of assisting population segments that do not have the means to provide for their basic needs and on actions against hunger. [...]

Art. 26. The Office of the Extraordinary Minister of State of Food Security and Hunger Combat is hereby created as an agency linked to the Presidency of the Republic.

§ 1º The Extraordinary Minister of State of Food Security and Hunger Combat shall be responsible for:

I – formulating and coordinating the implementation of the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy for the purpose of ensuring the human right to food in the national territory;

II – securing the participation of civil society in establishing guidelines for the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy;

III – fostering links between the policies and programs of the federal, state and municipal governments and the actions of civil society related to food production, food and nutrition;

IV – establishing guidelines and supervising and monitoring the implementation of programs contemplated in the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy.

§ 2º The Community Solidarity Program, the Executive Secretariat of the Community Solidarity Program, and up to two Secretariats shall make up the Cabinet of the Extraordinary Minister of Food Security and Hunger Combat Council.

§ 3º The Community Solidarity Program, created by art. 12 of Law n. 9,649 of May 27, 1998 is linked to the Cabinet of the Extraordinary Minister of State of Food Security and Hunger Combat.

On the same date, Decree n. 4,564 was also published, designating Mesa as the agency in charge of managing the Fund for Combating and Eradicating Poverty, defining how its Consultative and Monitoring Council was to function, and authorizing donations from natural persons or corporations, whether national or foreign, to the Fund for Combating and Eradicating Poverty, which were to be exclusively applied in actions against hunger.

As mentioned in the primer *Política de segurança alimentar para o Brasil* (Food security policy for Brazil) prepared by Mesa, the Zero Hunger Program was drawn up based on three axes:

- implementation of public policies;
- participatory building of the food and nutrition security policy;
- self-help action against hunger.

This proposal for formulating the Zero Hunger Program was illustrated in the first primer of the Program and also in a presentation made by the Minister of Food Security during the first meeting of Consea. According to the primer, the three axes were not independent from one another, that is, apart from not existing without the other axes, they complemented each other and there was a gray area between the three that would have to be worked on appropriately.

The first axis basically consists in the design of the original Zero Hunger Project, prepared by the Citizenship Institute, complemented by proposals drawn up by the government transition team, which contemplated the separation of policies contemplated in it into: structural policies, focused on the deeper causes of hunger and poverty; specific policies, meant to provide direct assistance for families to be able to access food; and local policies to be implemented by state and municipal governments and by organized civil society (MESA, 2003).

The other axis is a commitment assumed with social movements to consolidate the food and nutrition security policy in a participatory fashion. This prerogative was provided for in the government-structuring law mentioned above, through the creation of Consea as a body in charge of advising the President of the Republic in the process of drawing up the policy.

Finally, the third axis consists in self-help actions against hunger, around which civil society would be mobilized, similarly to what happened in a campaign led by sociologist *Betinho* early in the 1990s. Two Special Advisory Boards were created within the Presidency of the Republic to deal with topics related to the Zero Hunger Program: one for the corporate sector and another one for civil society.

While its institutional framework was still being structured, different actions were implemented. The main actions that laid the foundation for implementing the Zero Hunger Program within the federal government according to three axes mentioned above will be described below. This description is based on many assessments of the Zero Hunger Program disseminated by Mesa in 2003 and by the Ministry of Social Development (MDS) in 2004 and 2005.

In this first year, the assessment of the achievements of the Zero Hunger Program<sup>4</sup> highlights advances in implementing

4. *Principais ações implementadas pelo Programa Fome Zero (Main actions implemented by the Zero Hunger Program)* of January 15, 2004.

specific actions such as the Food Card Program in the Brazilian northeastern semiarid region and in the north region, the resuming of food distribution schemes for populations facing emergency situations, including specific communities such as indigenous and *Quilombo* communities, and the extension of the School Meal program to children aged from 0 to 6 years old. As opposed to past programs, the food baskets included family farming products (at the end of 2003, these already accounted for about one-third of all transferred funds) and were distributed by the organizations themselves (of camped families and *Quilombo* and indigenous communities), reducing their use for clientelistic purposes dramatically. Specific and structuring actions such as the Family Farming Food Acquisition Program and support for building cisterns, among others, were jointly implemented.

On another front, progress was made in drawing up the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy in a participatory fashion, based on the reestablishment of Consea, of 27 state-level councils and of dozens of municipal councils, and on the holding of the 2nd National Conference on Food and Nutrition Security in March 2004 as a successful event attended by 1,300 people, during which guidelines for the National Food and Nutrition Security policy and system were defined. Based on the resolutions of the Conference, a Food and Nutrition Security Organic Law Bill that will lend a permanent character to the policy was prepared and presented to the National Congress in October 2005.

### EMERGENCY ACTION IN THE SEMI-ARID REGION AND THE SMALL MUNICIPALITY MODEL

As mentioned above, the Lula administration was sworn into office in the middle of a drought that affected about 1,000 of the 1,200 municipalities located in the semi-arid region, which were exposed to a high risk of low food supply and hunger. This situation led Mesa to take a set of emergency actions in the region.

The first action was one aimed at ensuring the continuity of cash transfers under the Income Grant Program for a further three months (January, February and March 2003), while measures were taken to expand the Food Card Program (PCA) in the semi-arid region, which had been initially implemented in two municipalities of

the state of Piauí: Guaribas and Acauã. The program would be actually created through Provisional Measure n. 108 of February 27, 2003, which created the National Food Access Program – Food Card.

In the two municipalities, it was seen that of the 1,000 beneficiary families, 523 had not received any benefit until then, that is, they had not been included in the existing Unified Record, although they were very poor (the Managing Committees assessed that their per capita income ranged from R\$10.00 to R\$ 20.00).

At the same time, complementary programs began to be implemented in these municipalities, such as: training of the Managing Committees, which would be responsible for monitoring the actions in the municipalities and for selecting families in the future and monitoring the socioeconomic and nutritional status of the families that would enjoy the benefits; building of cisterns, which are water reservoirs that capture and store rainwater; and a literacy program focused on the about 800 young people and adults who were beneficiaries of the Food Card Program<sup>5</sup>.

These actions had widespread repercussions on public opinion and were widely disseminated by the written and TV media. The receipt of the Food Card by very poor families in Guaribas and Acauã, extremely poor municipalities, was covered by national prime-time news programs, which had the positive impact of showing that the “fight against hunger” of the Lula administration had begun.

Another concomitant action was the expansion of the Food Grant program of the Ministry of Health in the semi-arid region, adding over 800,000 new beneficiaries to the assisted group (in April, 200,000 families were included, doubling the number of those assisted in March 2003). This Program was truly assisting families at greater nutritional risk, such as very poor families with pregnant women and/or children up to 6 years old, but its coverage was still limited, given the potential number of still unassisted beneficiaries in the region.

Building cisterns ended up being one of the structural actions with the greatest impact on the region. Mesa entered into a partnership agreement with the Semi-arid Articulation (*Articulação do Semiárido - ASA*), a non-governmental organization linked to over 700 organizations and institutions and, also relying on funds

5. After completing a literacy course, these young people and adults went to Brasília to deliver the letters that they had learned to write to President Lula. The Zero Hunger brand was strong among all the persons who participated in this program.

donated by the private sector, financed the construction of 10,000 cisterns in 11 states. Cisterns are water reservoirs that store sufficient rainwater to be used in drought periods by a family of five members for a period of one year, which can be built at a cost of about R\$ 1,000. They make families independent from public water supply systems, thus preventing their use for political purposes by local and regional authorities. The methodology adopted by ASA involves educational actions to build the capacity and mobilize families and communities to build the cisterns and use the water captured by them and its goal is to build 1 million cisterns. Donations in cash to the Fund for Combating and Eradicating Poverty have also been used for building cisterns since then<sup>6</sup>.

The Food Card Program was expanded in the semi-arid region and later to all regions of the country based on a territorial expansion criterion. First, municipalities in the Brazilian semi-arid region with a population of up to 75,000, with an HDI (Human Development Index) below the national average, and with a civil-society organization of some kind, such as Local Integrated Development Forums (DLIS) of the previous administration, were selected and trained. According to the Ministry, the experience showed that an organized social base was indispensable for immediate and structural actions against hunger.

With the aim of implementing the PCA and other actions of the Zero Hunger Program, partnerships were established beforehand with state and municipal governments. State Coordinating Boards reporting to governors were set up at state level, as well as State Food and Nutrition Security Councils (Conseas), while Managing Committees Managers were established at municipal level and incentives provided for setting up Municipal Food and Nutrition Security Councils.

The Managing Committees became the Program's operational arm in the municipalities and analyzed existing records voluntarily to select families that met the Program's criteria and exclude those that didn't, in addition to monitoring and guiding beneficiary fami-

6. Concomitantly with the construction of cisterns, a partnership between Mesa and the ministries of Defense, National Integration and Land Development made it possible to map out areas in the semi-arid region affected by droughts for the Army to identify appropriate locations to build cisterns and implement small water supply projects and also to distribute water to populations affected by droughts using water trucks. Using the Army to distribute water was a practice adopted in previous administrations, but it was not being used for this purpose in recent years. This practice was aimed at preventing local political groups from distributing water to the population for political purposes. Municipalities complained that some state governments were favoring certain areas in election periods. This distribution arrangement benefited 255 municipalities facing emergency situations in 2003, involving about 1.1 million families.

lies. But they were also the Program's social control base, as they were in charge of monitoring and inspecting actions carried out under the Food Card Program and the Zero Hunger Program (BALSADI, DEL GROSSI and TAKAGI, 2004).

The main criticism of the local population at that time was related to the lack of transparency and criteria in how, in previous years, families were registered in the Unified Record – the single entry to the Food Card Program and other cash transfer programs. For this reason, setting up the Managing Committee with a majority of civil-society members (2/3 of the total) and delegated authority to assess and monitor beneficiary families gave social legitimacy to the program. The City Halls continued to be responsible for managing the Unified Record and for keeping representatives in the Managing Committee.

To organize the Managing Committees, two representatives from each municipality were trained and given guidance on matters related to Food and Nutrition Security to implement and monitor the PCA, prepare a Local Development Plan, stimulate public and civil-society actions and multiply their training in the Local Managing Committee through regional training courses. In each municipality, under the guidance of trained agents, civil society representatives were elected in local assemblies, the minutes of which were sent to Mesa. The assemblies had a strongly mobilizing effect and were attended by up to 3,000 participants. After setting up the Committee, they had access to a program management system that contained the list of those registered in the Unified Record and, through a password, their names were validated to receive the Food Card.

The process of establishing Committees advanced rapidly thanks to a regional capacity-building system with multiplying agents, but mainly because the municipalities in question had been mobilized to some extent due to the existence of the DLIS and Active Community programs in them and because they already had a communication channel with the Secretariat of the Community Solidarity Program, which continued to operate within Mesa. In October 2003, 1,476 Managing Committees were active throughout the semi-arid region and in the north region, the second region to which the Food Card Program was extended. In the same month, over one million families were included in the program. Once all the municipalities in these priority regions were covered, the program was expanded to other regions where DLIS programs existed

already, basically where the Food Security and Local Development Consortia (Consad) were being implemented, in keeping with the territorial expansion criterion.

The Consads are territorial schemes that include, in average, 20 municipalities located in less developed regions of the states. The idea was to carry out various interconnected structural actions to ensure food security and stimulate local development, such as microcredit actions, digital inclusion actions, actions to ensure the institutional character of the association of municipalities, preparation of a diagnosis and of a regional development plan and provision of incentives to family farming, in addition to the simultaneous implementation of the Food Card Program in associated municipalities.

As seen by the regional managers of Mesa, who were in charge of monitoring the Zero Hunger Program,

in the training process for setting up the Managing Committees people not only responded to the call of rural and urban community associations, trade unions, religious organizations, community councils, etc., but they also felt that were taking part in building something new. And this rebirth of hope and interest in participating had a very special flavor, given the previous reality, marked by countless community councils set up as a mere bureaucratic convenience without any true interest in fostering grassroots participation (BALSA-DI, DEL GROSSI and TAKAGI, 2004, p. 3). (*See table 1*)

For the first time in the history of these municipalities, local society was able to know which were the families assisted by social programs. These factors resulted in the undeniable empowerment of civil society locally.

This empowerment led to an intense involvement of the local population in the assisted municipalities in the first year. By December 2003, 2,451 municipalities had been trained by Mesa teams, 2,132 of which had set up PCA Managing Committees (Table 1). Because each managing committee was set up with nine members, there were, altogether, 19,188 volunteers involved in the Zero Hunger Program on a daily basis in all the regions of Brazil.

As a result of this involvement, the PCA was covering 1.9 million families in 2,369 Brazilian municipalities in all regions of the country at the end of its first year, 1.4 million of which were located in the semi-arid region, ensuring a 72 % coverage of all extremely

**Table 1 – Municipalities and Managing Committees trained and set up in Brazil in 2003, respectively, by Large Regions and States**

| States and Regions        | Trained Municipalities | Established Managing Committees |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Alagoas                   | 101                    | 85]                             |
| Bahia                     | 381                    | 333                             |
| Ceará                     | 175                    | 171                             |
| Maranhão                  | 209                    | 92                              |
| Paraíba                   | 218                    | 214                             |
| Pernambuco                | 172                    | 168                             |
| Piauí                     | 222                    | 211                             |
| Rio Grande do Norte       | 164                    | 154                             |
| Sergipe                   | 72                     | 72                              |
| <b>Northeast Region</b>   | <b>1,714</b>           | <b>1,500</b>                    |
| Goiás                     | 10                     | 10                              |
| Mato Grosso               | 6                      | 6                               |
| Mato Grosso do Sul        | 15                     | 15                              |
| <b>Mid-west Region</b>    | <b>31</b>              | <b>31</b>                       |
| Espírito Santo            | 10                     | 9                               |
| Minas Gerais              | 170                    | 168                             |
| São Paulo                 | 24                     | 22                              |
| Rio de Janeiro            | 14                     | 12                              |
| <b>Southeast Region</b>   | <b>218</b>             | <b>211</b>                      |
| Acre                      | 21                     | 21                              |
| Amazonas                  | 60                     | 45                              |
| Amapá                     | 15                     | 13                              |
| Pará                      | 130                    | 94                              |
| Rondônia                  | 51                     | 44                              |
| Roraima                   | 14                     | 7                               |
| Tocantins                 | 137                    | 106                             |
| <b>North Region</b>       | <b>428</b>             | <b>330</b>                      |
| Paraná                    | 18                     | 18                              |
| Rio Grande do Sul         | 25                     | 25                              |
| Santa Catarina            | 17                     | 17                              |
| <b>South Region</b>       | <b>60</b>              | <b>60</b>                       |
| <b>Grand Total Brazil</b> | <b>2,451</b>           | <b>2,132</b>                    |

Source: BALSADI; DEL GROSSI; TAKAGI, 2004.

poor families in the northeast region. Adding these families to those that received the floor amount of the Family Grant Program (R\$ 50.00 inherited from the PCA), the program's coverage in December 2003 hit the mark of 1.6 million families in the semi-arid region, i.e. it was already larger than that of the Income Grant Program at the beginning of that year and it was a permanent program (although its benefits are granted for a fixed period).

The experience of setting up local groups to improve the allocation of government spending was unprecedented in Brazil's history. A survey carried out by Mesa showed that the actions of the Managing Committees contributed to avoid the provision of the Food Card benefit to 30 % of all people registered in the Unified Record for not satisfying its eligibility criteria. This was possible because the Managing Committees were told to assess registered families in the light of their properties and signs of wealth, considering that it was difficult to identify families based on their "per capita income." Several cases were reported of civil servants who were relatives of mayors and of people who had cars and real estate of their own, with even a swimming pool, who had applied for the program unduly, many of whom were exposed in TV news programs.

The prior actions of the Managing Committees, which were also preceded by cooperation agreements with state and municipal governments, did not affect the program's implementation pace. Balsadi, Del Grossi and Takagi (2004) assessed the program's pace of implementation in the first eleven months of the PCA in the light of the number of assisted families and municipalities and saw that it was faster than that of other programs implemented before, such as the Income Grant and Food Grant programs.

In addition to these actions, the other Ministries also gave priority to the region for implementing the following structural actions, which were linked to one another under a policy designed to provide the population of the semi-arid region with better tools to mitigate the effects of droughts in their daily lives:

- Harvest Insurance provided by the Ministry of Agrarian Development in three (3) states (Ceará, Pernambuco and Paraíba), which ensures cash compensations for losses to registered farmers, municipalities and states.
- The Family Farming Food Acquisition Program to set up strategic food stock as of July in partnership with Mesa, the

Ministry of Agrarian Development and the Ministry of Agriculture through the National Food Supply Company (Conab).

- Prioritization of family farming through the transfer of adapted technologies in partnership with Embrapa and state research organizations in the semi-arid region. The implemented projects were aimed at supporting sheep and goat breeders; facilitating the establishment of vegetable gardens; processing adapted crops such as cassava and fruits; and implementing radio programs to provide technical guidance using an easy-to-understand language, all of which for the purpose of generating jobs and income for populations in the semi-arid region and of promoting local development.

## EMERGENCY ACTIONS IN SPECIFIC COMMUNITIES

The Zero Hunger Program selected the following groups as priority targets for emergency actions: camped families waiting to be settled under the agrarian reform program; indigenous and *Quilombo* communities at food risk; and families of garbage pickers in large cities.

Baskets of basic food products began to be distributed to all camped families on an emergency basis (60,756 families in 637 camps). The food baskets were more complete than those distributed in the past in both qualitative and quantitative terms and the items included in them were previously agreed upon with social movements. They included rice, corn flour, raw cassava and wheat flour, soybean oil, granulated sugar, macaroni, salt, coffee and whole milk powder, at an average cost of R\$ 50.00. The procurement was done by the National Food Supply Company through public auctions and the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (Incra) was charged with distributing the baskets. 1.3 million baskets were distributed in 2003, totaling 32.5 thousand tons of food products.

Emergency food baskets adapted to ethnic traditions were also distributed to a total of 63 indigenous and 150 *Quilombo* communities at nutritional risk identified by local agents. The per capita amount of transfers to the school meal program for indigenous schools was also raised from R\$ 0.13 to R\$ 0.34 per student/ day, making it possible to buy a set of food items adapted to the needs of indigenous communities.

At the same time, investments were made in structural actions focused on expanding agriculture for self-consumption, raising small animals, building flour-processing facilities, stimulating handicraft activities and other sustainable development-oriented actions through partnerships and agreements with state governments and ministries, such as the ministries of Environment and Culture, through the Palmares Foundation.

Incentives to set up recycling cooperatives, implement health care and education actions, deliver training courses, and hold awareness-raising campaigns on selective garbage collection also began to be provided in communities of garbage pickers in large cities.

## FAMILY FARMING FOOD ACQUISITION PROGRAM

This is one of the program's structural actions to combine local food production to increases in food consumption. The Program was prepared over the first half of the year and launched in July 2003 once Law n. 10,696/2003 was passed. It was an element of the first 2003-2004 Family Farming Harvest Plan and its purpose was to encourage family farming by remunerating its produce appropriately; reestablish a minimum stock of basic food products through direct and advance procurement of family farming products in the regions where they are consumed; and distribute food products to populations at food risk.

This law provided a new tool to make it possible for farmers to opt for selling their produce directly to the government without the need for tender processes and at prices close to market prices and, in specific situations, with advance of funds for sowing, thus stimulating food production. As a result, family farming products began to be used in food security actions, in municipal food distribution programs, and in setting up food security stocks, removing historical hurdles imposed by previous laws, which made it difficult to boost local agriculture, a major source of jobs.

In addition, the hurdle of minimum prices, which were too low to cover the production costs of family farmers, was removed.

Procurement per low-income family farmer was limited to R\$ 2.5 thousand a year<sup>7</sup>. Although it was not meant to be an agricul-

7. Recently, the Program's Managing Committee approved a raise in the ceiling set for the Milk Program to R\$ 5,000, based on the understanding that producing milk is a continuous activity throughout the year.

tural policy tool, the original proposal characterized it as a program to be included in the Food and Nutrition Security Policy and not just as a program applied to the agricultural market.

The program, which is jointly operated by five ministries (Mesa and later the Ministry of Social Development - MDS, the coordinator of the Managing Committee; the Ministry of Land Development - MDA; the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply - MAPA; the Ministry of Finance - MF and the Ministry of Planning - MP), basically involves three modalities: recovery of strategic food security stocks; local food procurement; and a program to stimulate milk production and consumption. The first modality relies on three tools: *direct procurement*, with the National Food Supply Company purchasing the physical produce of farmers directly, which refers to a credit for storable production for farmers without access to credit; *special*, which refers to credits that can be paid off with products for simultaneous donation to charities and for use in school meals and other local applications.

The direct procurement modality is operated by central regional procurement facilities specifically set up for this purpose. The products preferably purchased under this modality are the following ones: rice, beans, manioc flour, corn, milk and wheat. The *advance procurement* modality, which is also operated by the National Food Supply Company, was implemented in an innovative fashion through the *CPR - Alimentos* (Farmers' Bond - Food), which introduced a new tool to stimulate food production under family farming schemes for family farmers who had no access to credit before.

The second modality, local procurement, was directly implemented based on agreements with states, city halls, and associations and/or cooperatives of family farmers, and the products bought under this modality are directly distributed to municipal food security programs (school meal program, day-care centers, hospitals, subsidized restaurants, charities and social work organizations). It is very similar to the *special advance procurement* modality and the range of products bought under this modality is broad, respecting local realities.

The Milk Program was designed to strengthen small farmers' milk production in the semi-arid region (northeast region more to the north of the state of Minas Gerais, comprising ten states altogether), to remunerate their production with fair prices and to as-

sist the low-income population through milk distribution schemes. Initially, farmers that produced up to 100 liters a day, who accounted for 96 % of all milk producers in the northeast region, were assisted and preference was given to those who produced up to 50 liters a day. It was implemented based on a political commitment to resume, in a new format, the Milk Program implemented by the former president and currently senator José Sarney.<sup>8</sup>

In the first half year in operation, the program invested R\$ 162.5 million in its three modalities. In the direct procurement modality, 6.9 thousand tons of food products were bought from 3.4 thousand farmers, and in the advance procurement modality 37,000 farmers were assisted, 55 % of whom in the northeast region. Altogether, almost 50,000 farmers were assisted with an average purchase of R\$ 1,600 per farmer. The larger amount of funds applied to the advance procurement modality is explained by the fact that the Law was passed in the pre-harvest period and also by the huge demand prevailing at that moment for funds for sowing from farmers who had no access to official credit before, so as to encourage them to step up their food production. As for the milk modality, agreements were entered into with the ten states located in the semi-arid region and funds were transferred to them to implement the program as of 2004.

The northeast region, which concentrates most family farmers in Brazil, was given priority and had 50 % of all its families covered by the PAA and 1/3 of all funds allocated to it in that first year of the program. The program was strongly supported by family farmers' organizations such as Contag (Agricultural Workers' Confederation), Fetraf (Federation of Workers in Agriculture) and the Landless Movement, as well as by Consea.

The results achieved through the program include, apart from support to self-consumption and the opportunity afforded to farmers to sell their surplus produce at market prices, a recovery of the prices paid to farmers. In Delgado et al. (2005), mention is made of cases where a simple announcement of public procurement of a product in a certain quantity was enough to ensure the recovery of its price. Other results mentioned by the authors are the renewed presence of

8. According to a newspaper article, senator Sarney once said: "When I decided to support Lula, long before his campaign, the only thing I asked him was to resume the milk distribution program" (newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*, November 30, 2003).

the federal government in the family farmers' environment; incentives for farmers to organize themselves; and increased production and diversification of better-quality food for self-consumption.

In another evaluation of the program, carried out by Deser in 2005, reports were collected from farmers covered by the program and it was concluded that it had produced positive impacts in terms of income generation and stabilization of family farmers' organizations, apart from considerably improving the food and nutrition status of the families assisted by it both in quantitative and qualitative terms, thanks to the food directly bought from diversified family farming schemes. The program benefits farmers not only by purchasing their produce, but also by ensuring better prices in their municipalities as a whole due to the influence of the prices suggested by the National Food Supply Company on the market. In addition, it allows for farmers to organize themselves in groups and associations, which is one of the criteria for being covered by the program, apart from promoting improvements in the food habits of the families to which food is distributed (DESER, 2005).

### INTEGRATED ACTIONS WITH OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

In parallel to these specific actions, partnerships and integrated initiatives were jointly launched by different ministries, according to a report prepared by Mesa called *Ações dos Ministérios no Programa Fome Zero* (Actions of Ministries in the Zero Hunger Program) in 2003.

Among the strategic actions contemplated in the original Zero Hunger Project, which were defined in partnership with other ministries, the following ones deserve special mention: increase in the amount transferred to the school meal program, tax exemptions applied to staple food products, and incentives to food production, for the purpose of lowering food prices.

As a result of a joint action between Mesa and the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for implementing the National School Meal Program (Pnae), the amount transferred to schools for them to serve meals to students was increased for preschools.

This was the first action of the Zero Hunger Program, as announced by the government on January 30, 2003. The per capita

amount transferred to preschools for this purpose was increased from R\$ 0.06 to R\$ 0.13 a day, benefiting 4.7 million children in the 4-6 age bracket throughout the country. In addition, the benefit was unprecedentedly extended to public and philanthropic day-care centers, which began to receive a per capita transfer of R\$ 0.18/day, benefiting 881,000 children aged from 0 to 3 years old in 17.6 thousand day-care centers. Another action was an increase in the transfer for school meals served in indigenous schools from R\$ 0.13 to R\$ 0.34 per capita/day, benefiting 116,000 students.

A tax exemption for food was approved as a result of a partnership with the Ministry of Finance based on Law n. 10,865, which provided for full exemption from PIS/Cofins contributions for groceries, rice, beans and manioc flour, as well as for fertilizers, pesticides, seeds and vaccines for veterinary use.

Another tax-related action was the issuing of a decree in April providing for an exemption from the Tax on Industrial Products (IPI) for food donations to charities and municipalities participating in the Zero Hunger Program. Tax exemptions were extremely important to ensure the feasibility of establishing Food Banks throughout the country.

In the area of food education, an agreement between Mesa and the Globo publishing house and the Ministry of Health resulted in the production of 1 million primers for children providing guidance on healthy food habits. The idea of the Globo publishing house was that, for each magazine sold at R\$ 1.00, four others should be produced to be donated. Five million primers were thus distributed in 2003 and 2004 in newsstands and schools throughout Brazil through the National Food Supply Company and the Brazilian Post (ECT).

Other structural actions carried out by other ministries with financial support from Mesa include:

- support to family farming through the Ministry of Agrarian Development in the form of assistance to infrastructure projects, training courses for farmers, strengthening of family farming, and contributions to the Harvest Insurance Fund (R\$ 157 million);
- implementation of the Sisvan – Food and Nutrition Surveillance System, coordinated by the Ministry of Health. Mesa transferred funds in the order of R\$ 4 million to begin a national capacity-building process to ensure a better moni-

- toring of children's growth and to strengthen an agenda for promoting healthy food habits in the basic health care system and in actions of the Zero Hunger Program;
- establishment, at the Ministry of Science and Technology (MCT), of a network-based research group called Millennium Institute for Food Security with the aim of carrying out scientific research to contribute to eliminate food and nutrition gaps in Brazil with a focus on two main topics: Food Security and Education and Adding Value to Agricultural Products, involving funds amounting to R\$ 9 million, R\$ 6 million of which from Mesa and R\$ 3 million from the MCT;
  - implementation of a Community Telecommunications Center project based on a partnership between Mesa and the Ministry of Communications with the aim of implementing telecommunication centers in 110 cities to ensure free-of-charge access to the Internet for the population of municipalities covered by the Food Card Program and the Food Security and Local Development Consortia (Consads). It also involved making at least one computer with an Internet connection available in 1,100 municipalities covered by the Zero Hunger Program;
  - a partnership with the Ministry of Sports in the Second Half Program in the distribution of meals to young people participating in the program, with the aim of promoting sporting activities for children and young people in integration with the educational sector, benefitting 107,144 young people and involving fund transfers of R\$ 15 million;
  - Sustainable Amazon Program/Solidarity-Based Action in the Amazon (*Ação Amazônia Solidária*) – financing of 147 community projects with the aim of generation income in extractive communities in the Amazon region and promoting environmentally sustainable social and economic development, coordinated by the Ministry of Environment (R\$ 7 million);
  - an agreement with the Palmares Foundation to implement projects designed to improve the infrastructure in *Quilombo* communities in terms of food availability, education, sanitation, housing, health care, culture and job and income generation, with the goal of assisting 150 such communities in 2004, benefitting 15,000 families at a cost of R\$ 1.6 million;

- a partnership between Mesa and the Ministry of Defense and National Integration for the Army to distribute water in water trucks in municipalities facing calamities recognized by the Ministry of Integration. In addition, using a GPS-based system, the Army was assigned to map out water distribution sites with the aim of building cisterns to store rainwater, reducing the dependence of these municipalities on water trucks in following years. R\$ 20 million were transferred for this purpose, benefiting 1.1 million families;
- an agreement with Embrapa for developing and implementing technology transfer projects for family farmers with a focus on the northeast region, involving a total sum R\$ 17.6 million, R\$ 12.7 million from Mesa and R\$ 4.6 million from Embrapa.

Partnerships that did not involve Mesa funds include:

- operationalization of the process of generating the benefit for priority families in the Food Card Program by the Datasus system of the Ministry of Health, involving from identification of the families to sending the monthly payroll to Caixa Econômica Federal;
- increase in transfers for purchasing basic medicines (antibiotics, antipyretics and analgesics) from R\$ 1.00 to R\$ 2.00 per inhabitant by the Ministry of Health in municipalities assisted by the Zero Hunger Program, and prioritization of municipalities covered by the Zero Hunger Program to organize a network of health care services focused on parasitic diseases; establishment of the research network of the National Institute of the Semi-arid Region (Insa), linked to the MCT, with an investment of R\$ 16.5 million, for the purpose of organizing and disseminating all Brazilian scientific research on the semi-arid region, proposing programs and providing inputs to public policies intended to minimize problems caused by droughts;
- establishment of ten Technological Vocational Centers (CVTs) in ten states (nine northeastern states plus the state of Espírito Santo) to generate professional training and income opportunities, adding innovation to productive processes;
- the National Full Family Care Program of the Ministry of Social Assistance, which gave priority to municipalities covered by the Zero Hunger Program in its implementation. The Plan

- comprises various actions and projects for disabled and elderly people, children and adolescents, and families at risk;
- cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Communications, the Brazilian Post and Mesa for receiving food donations in over 12,000 post offices of the Brazilian Post spread throughout Brazil;
- establishment of the Interministerial Group for Coexistence with the Semi-arid Region coordinated by the Ministry of National Integration to participate in emergency and structural actions to ensure water supply in the semi-arid region;
- establishment of the Interministerial Committee for the Social Inclusion of Garbage Pickers and Support to the Eradication of Garbage Dumps, with the aim of integrating actions to assist these populations under the coordination of the Ministry of Cities working together with Mesa;
- action to advise and mobilize notary's offices in different municipalities and the population covered by the Food Card Program to organize them in self-help days to provide free-of-charge civil records to people assisted by the Zero Hunger Program. Mesa and the Special Secretariat for Human Rights prepared a manual on how to get a free-of-charge civil record and advised the Managing Committees on how to identify families without basic civil documents.

Still as part of the efforts to promote interministerial links, mention should be made of the establishment of the Consultative Council of the Fund for Combating and Eradicating Poverty, with the aim of making sure that the resources of the Fund would be used as planned and would be appropriately monitored jointly with other eight ministries and different civil-society councils, something that was not done in the past.

## LOCAL POLICIES

In relation to local policies, Mesa prepared and distributed a document in March 2003, during the 7th March of Mayors, that pointed out some of the initiatives that municipalities could adopt to create local food and nutrition security programs, including drawing up public policies and establishing municipal Conseas and specific agencies to support initiatives of organized civil society in

this area. One of these initiatives was setting up a Food Reception and Distribution Center managed by civil-society and government representatives to be in charge of registering beneficiary organizations and families, establishing partnerships with different institutions, private corporations and volunteers, and collecting resources and products in the locality, taking care of their storage and transportation. This was an innovative proposal that was not well understood by the municipalities. Setting up a municipal Food Reception and Distribution Center afforded the advantage of holding the municipalities accountable for the donations they received, instead of placing this responsibility on the federal government. The logistics involved in storing and transporting donated products constitutes the greatest hurdle for coordinating this task at federal level.

Another initiative taken by Mesa was to define the operational design for partnership agreements between local programs and City halls, in which the federal administration would be responsible for providing technical advisory and training and would transfer funds for purchasing equipment and inputs. The format of the programs for Food Banks, subsidized restaurants, Community Kitchens and Vegetable Gardens was defined and they were linked to local procurement programs, particularly to the PAA.

The intention of the Ministry was not one of financing isolated projects. The idea was to have them all included in an integrated local system. Municipalities were advised to implement Integrated Municipal Food and Nutrition Security Systems with the aim of: fostering integration among various food and nutrition security actions at local level; ensuring a more effective use of public funds in fighting hunger; and exploring the food production potential of each locality<sup>9</sup>.

## BUILDING THE NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY POLICY

The second axis for government actions in the FNS area was that of building the food and nutrition security policy in a participa-

9. For preparing a manual to guide the implementation and management of Public Food Banks, called *Como implantar e gerir Bancos de Alimentos*, MESA collected suggestions from representatives of the Food Banks of Santo André, Campinas, Goiânia and Ponta Grossa and of programs such as the *Prato Cheio* (Full Dish) Association (of the Getúlio Vargas Foundation), *Ajuda Alimentando* (of the Israelite Federation) and *Mesa Brasil* (of Sesc).

tory fashion through Consea, which was set up in January 30, 2003 with 62 members, 13 of whom were ministers, 38 were civil society representatives and 11 were observers. The method for selecting its civil society members was the same one that was used when the first Consea was established, in 1994, based on suggestions to invite renowned personalities (and not organizations), with the President of the Republic making the final decision to approve its membership.

Consea began to operate regularly in 2003 through ordinary meetings held at two-month intervals and different extraordinary meetings. The minister of Mesa was the secretary of Consea and its administrative framework was also under Mesas's responsibility.

In its first year in operation, Consea reported the following activities in its annual report:

- a) submission of a proposal to change the conventional guidelines of the 2003-2004 Harvest Plan, giving priority to taking measures to foster family farming schemes and productive arrangements of people settled under the agrarian reform program;
- b) discussion and approval of Mesas's action plan for 2003 and of actions to be taken in connection with the 2004-2007 Multi-Year Plan;
- c) claim for greater participation in discussions on a bill on transgenics at the Civil House (Office of the Chief of Staff);
- d) definition of the members of the Organizing Committee of the 2nd National Conference on Food and Nutrition Security;
- e) guidance for holding municipal, state and regional preparatory conferences to the 2nd National Conference;
- f) guidance for setting up municipal and state councils through a specific manual prepared for this purpose, which resulted in the establishment of 110 municipal councils and 22 state councils until December 2003.

The 2nd National Conference, which was held in March 2004, was a major event that mobilized all the members of Consea. It was attended by 1,000 delegates appointed by the State Conferences and about 300 guests. The Conference approved 153 resolutions, 47 of which were given priority. These priority proposals include the drafting of a Food and Nutrition Security Organic Law and the establish-

ment of a Sustainable National Food and Nutrition Security System with a budget of its own, a specific fund, participatory management, and the holding of Conferences at two-year intervals (*Final report of the 2nd Conference*, 2004).

After the 2nd Conference was held, the Council began to act more intensively through 12 internal bodies that included Thematic Chambers, Working Groups and Standing Committees, which were created to improve its operation and allow for deeper discussions on the topics to be addressed at its monthly meetings.

## SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

After the president-elect's announcement that priority would be given to fighting hunger, many people offered to help the Citizenship Institute as volunteers of the Zero Hunger Program. In the early stages of the new administration the situation was not different. Huge numbers of people offered to help the government's priority program and wanted to participate in different ways, often by donating food or money<sup>10</sup>.

Voluntary participation in the program ended up becoming a true civic campaign, but for effective results to be ensured it was necessary to have an organized scheme and a sound structure. According to a primer prepared by Mesa called *Política de Segurança Alimentar* (Food Security Policy), the self-help action had three objectives:

- creating effective channels to ensure the participation of civil society;
- establishing and organizing campaigns for donations of food and cash;
- expressing the cross-cutting nature of the Zero Hunger Program within the government, where ministries would be jointly accountable for its actions.

For these objectives to be achieved, a framework was created within Mesa made up of a Special Assistance Unit (NAE) and a

10. One of the first emergencies Mesa had to deal with was to try and prevent a caravan of trucks from transporting, from Rio de Janeiro to Brasília, tons of food items to be donated to the Zero Hunger Program. The trucks parked in front of the Planalto Palace. The food was taken to storehouses of the National Food Supply Company on an emergency basis. It was seen that the problem was not exactly receiving the food, but rather taking it to those who needed it without an established distribution arrangement. It didn't make sense to send the food to Brasília to then take it to the municipalities from there. Donations should be sought in the municipalities themselves, preferably avoiding this long route.

unit with a 0800 toll-free hotline. The idea of keeping the self-help management framework separated from the actual management of the public policy was implemented to prevent the Zero Hunger Program of the federal government from becoming another campaign designed to raise funds and collect food, as was suggested at one point.

The Special Assistance Unit was initially set up to provide information to donors and analyze proposed donations from companies, professional associations, NGOs and individuals interested in developing a partnership with the program. In its first month in operation, this Unit registered 70 proposals that involved much more than food donations and included the delivery of professional training courses and job-generating schemes, among many other ideas.

For companies or organizations to be awarded a certificate authorizing them to use the logo of the Zero Hunger Program, they were requested to submit a four-year action plan and a detailed description of activities scheduled to be carried out in the first year. Mesa monitored the activities of the companies. They were registered for this purpose on a website that was created to provide information and clarifications to the population on the program's actions.

Manuals were also prepared to provide information to companies on how they could participate in the program and special accounts were opened at Banco do Brasil and Caixa Econômica Federal to receive donations to the Zero Hunger Program. The funds that were raised were exclusively channeled to the Fund for Combating and Eradicating Poverty.

A system was also set up to collect food donations. Non-perishable food items exceeding 12,000 kg were to be sent to the National Food Supply Company or to the Food Reception and Distribution Centers (CRD) that would be set up in the municipalities. Food in small volumes was sent to collection sites registered with Mesa, the addresses of which were disseminated on the website. Mesa, Conab and the Office of the Special Advisor to the President coordinated this procedure.

The 0800 toll-free hotline to provide information on the Zero Hunger Program became operational on March 17, 2003 with a team of 900 operators.

Late in 2003, 99 partner companies and organizations of the Zero Hunger Program had been registered based on the social in-

clusion projects presented by them. Another 1,412 institutions or organizations were authorized to use the logo of the Zero Hunger Program in shows, exhibitions, soccer games and events in which food or funds were collected for the program. R\$ 7.3 million were deposited in the program's current and invested in building cisterns in the Brazilian northeastern semi-arid region.

At the same time, two action fronts were developed at the Office of the Special Advisor to the President: the so-called citizens' mobilization (*mobilização cidadã*), with incentives and training to set up voluntary groups to promote mobilization around the Zero Hunger Program; and mobilization for building a network of partner entrepreneurs of the Zero Hunger Program jointly with Mesa's NAE unit.

The first front resulted in an institutional framework of its own: the Office of the Special Advisor to the President organized lectures and trained volunteers to take part in the so-called "components of the Self-Help Action against Hunger": *Copo* (glass) (Zero Hunger Program Operational Council); *Prato* (plate) (All for the Zero Hunger Program Action Program); *Sal* (salt) (Food Security Agents) and *Talher* (flatware) (Food Education Instructors)<sup>11</sup>. These rather creative and didactic nomenclatures often conflicted with the structure of the Managing Committees stimulated by Mesa, which were not structured in a self-help fashion. The Managing Committees were part of the shared management framework of a national public program. In addition, these nomenclatures enhanced the potential for people to misunderstand what the Zero Hunger Program of the federal government was all about.

With the aim of mobilizing entrepreneurs, an NGO called Apoio Fome Zero (Support to the Zero Hunger Program) was created in São Paulo and financed by a group of entrepreneurs with the First Lady Marisa Leticia Lula da Silva as Honorary President. This NGO develops projects in support of the program, one of which is in its second edition already: awarding of prizes to municipalities that excel in the management of the school meal program. This NGO also keeps a website: < [www.fomezero.org.br](http://www.fomezero.org.br) > .

In January 2004, one year after it was created, Mesa was closed down and its structure was incorporated into a new Ministry – the Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Combat, which also absorbed two other agencies created in 2003: the Ministry of Social As-

11. For more details, see: *Fome Zero: manual do mutirão*, 2003.

sistance and the Executive Secretariat of the Family Grant Program, a unified cash transfer program that incorporated the Food Card Program of the Zero Hunger Program and also the School Grant, Food Grant, and Gas Grant programs which were under the responsibility of various ministries before. The purpose of this merge was to ensure a more rational management of these programs by the federal administration.

The importance of analyzing the Zero Hunger Program in greater depth is justified by the following reasons: it is a proposal for a Food and Nutrition Security Policy that was implemented for the first time in Brazil as a top priority action defined by the President of the Republic; it relies on a Ministry of its own and on a considerable budget, after one decade marked by the lack of clearly defined social policies; it has been considered an example by many other countries; it has had high approval ratings in all opinion polls since the outset, despite the criticisms from the media particularly.

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## 4. ZERO HUNGER: A PROJECT TURNED INTO A GOVERNMENT STRATEGY<sup>1</sup>

Adriana Veiga Aranha

*“This is a country that has so much fertile land and so many people who want to work that there is no reason to talk about hunger. Millions of Brazilians [...] however, lack food today. They survive, miraculously, under the poverty line, if they do not die while begging for a piece of bread. This is why I included a food security program to be known as Zero Hunger Program in the list of priorities of my Administration.”*  
(Inauguration speech of President Lula – January 1, 2003)

### INTRODUCTION

Brazil is a country with a huge development potential that, through expansion and economic growth cycles over the 20th century, turned from a rural and agrarian society into an urban society with a major industrial complex, a modern agricultural sector, and vibrant and dynamic cities. The country moved from a marginal position in the world to being the 8th economy in the world, but this growth has not benefitted its poor population or ensured rights to it. As a result, despite all this progress, Brazil is still marked by deep social and economic gaps. In the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, Brazil's social debt increased. The 90-million population of Brazil in the 1970s more than doubled, but appropriate living conditions have not been created for these new Brazilians.

Social segregation resulting from centuries of distortions deprived large segments of the country's population from the fundamental human rights to food, health care, safety, housing, education and a family life.

1. Summary of a chapter of the book *Fome Zero: uma história brasileira* published by the Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Combat.

Experience has shown that the economic growth experienced in the past, with no income distribution, was insufficient to create solid domestic markets and lay the foundation for sustainable development.

When President Lula announced, back in 2003, that fighting hunger and poverty would be a priority in his first term, he launched a national strategy to create, implement and invest financial and human resources in different programs and actions focused on a common goal that united all the population around it, namely, eradicating hunger and extreme poverty from the country. When he said that if at the end of his term every Brazilian citizen had three meals a day he would have fulfilled his life's mission, the president included topics related to hunger, food and nutrition security and fighting poverty in the domestic political agenda and presented to society the main elements of a broad project for the Nation.

Dealing with the hunger problem as a national issue and not as an individual fatality is the responsibility of society as a whole and of governments at the federal, state, municipal, and federal-district levels. The federative organization of the Brazilian State involves three autonomous spheres of government: the Union (the federal administration); 26 states and the Federal District; and 5,564 municipalities. Transforming actions of the State by integrating them into one another and linking them to society's efforts to put an end to hunger in Brazil was the great challenge taken up by the Lula administration through the *Zero Hunger Program*. Therefore, eliminating the serious and inter-related problems of poverty and inequality in Brazil requires great *capacity to integrate* governmental efforts at all levels and to involve society as a whole.

At the same that it was widely supported both by Brazilian society and the international community and included in the global agenda, this commitment led to a national debate on different points of view on the problem and on different proposals to tackle it.

The consensus among Brazilian experts that ensuring sufficient food supply would be necessary to fight hunger, as well as raising the population's purchasing power, was not exactly in tune with the proposals for facing this problem. The different emphasis placed on each of these issues revealed different concepts in relation to the phenomenon of *hunger*, which would therefore require different proposals to solve the problem.

Since the hunger problem in Brazil was not being caused by insufficient food supply<sup>2</sup> but rather by difficulties to access food, the concept adopted by the Brazilian Government was based on the assumption that eradicating hunger entailed fighting extreme poverty and social inequality, which in turn required combining actions against hunger with a *food and nutrition security* policy that took into account the human right to food and Brazil's food sovereignty. The *human right to adequate food* is ensured when each man, woman and child has physical and economic access, on a permanent basis, to adequate food or to means to obtain it. And *food sovereignty* is the right of peoples to define their own sustainable policies and strategies for food production, marketing and consumption, respecting their multiple cultural characteristics.

Although President Lula took on the commitment to ensure that all Brazilians would have “three meals a day” in his inauguration speech, a comprehensive debate was held in Brazil in this regard. And the government decided to fight hunger by building food and nutrition security for the country. It was a longer, but more sustainable, path.

## ZERO HUNGER AND FOOD SECURITY

The expression “food security” was used for the first time in a federal government document in Brazil in 1986. Years later, in 1991, during the administration of president Collor, it was used in a proposal for a National Food Security Policy indicating alternatives for Brazil that was announced by the Workers' Party and presented to president Itamar Franco shortly thereafter. In 1993, food security was given prominence in Brazil as a result of mobilizations carried out under the Citizens' Action against Hunger and Poverty and for Life<sup>3</sup>. And when the National Food Security Council (Consea)<sup>4</sup> was established and the 1<sup>st</sup> National Conference on Food Security was held in Brazil, comprehensive discussions on the topic took place in the country.

2. FAO data show that food availability in Brazil increased from 2,216kcal/person/day in 1961 to 3,094kcal/person/day in 2003-2005, exceeding the minimum calorie amount recommended for Brazil, which is 1,900 kcal/person/day.

3. This was a development of the Movement for Ethics in Politics, which led to the impeachment of president Collor.

4. Advisory body to the president made up of representatives of civil society and of governmental agencies that was closed down in 1995.

The idea of implementing a Food Security Policy in Brazil has been discussed since the first presidential campaign was held after Brazil's return to democracy. When direct elections for president were resumed, in 1989, the then candidate Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva addressed this topic, as he did in his 1994, 1998 and 2002 campaigns. Various caravans, called Citizenship Caravans,<sup>5</sup> were held during which the problems of extreme poverty and poverty were raised in different ways. The last document, prepared by the Citizenship Institute in 2001, was incorporated into a governmental program that was presented to society during Lula's victorious presidential campaign in 2002, called *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger).

Discussions on food and nutrition security were vigorously resumed under the administration of president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, in 2003. This priority materialized in the creation, in the very early stages of the current federal administration, of three bodies directly linked to the Presidency of the Republic specifically focused on implementing a National Food and Nutrition Security Policy, namely: i) the Extraordinary Ministry of Food Security and Hunger Combat (Mesa), ii) the National Food Security Council (Consea), made up of governmental representatives and personalities from civil society organizations, which was reestablished, and iii) a Special Advisory Body to the Presidency of the Republic for Mobilization around the Zero Hunger Program.

The food and nutrition security policy adopted in the early stages of the Lula administration was based on a combination of three groups of policies, namely:

- a) *Structural policies*, focused on addressing the deeper causes of food insecurity, which was to be jointly adopted by the federal government and states and municipalities (i.e., agricultural and agrarian policies, supply policies, food marketing and distribution policies, job- and income-generating policies, education and health care policies).
- b) *Specific policies*, intended to ensure appropriate conditions immediately for families facing hunger to begin to feed themselves appropriately (i.e., cash transfer policies for poor families, food distribution policies, food security and quality policies).

5. Non-governmental organization created before president Lula was elected to systematize information and projects for Brazil's development with social inclusion.

- c) *Local policies*, designed to mobilize state and municipal managers to promote food and nutrition security (i.e., creation of subsidized restaurants and of food banks, promotion of farmers' fairs, provision of technical assistance to family farmers).

In 2004, the governmental responsibility for implementing the National Food Security Policy and, consequently, the Zero Hunger Program was assigned to the then recently-created Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Combat (MDS), incorporating actions against hunger into the daily work of State institutions in their efforts to foster social development. In this new design, Consea remained linked to the Presidency of the Republic to preserve its supra- and inter-sectoral character while the MDS and the Social Policy Chamber of the Civil House took on the responsibility of ensuring the feasibility of agreements between the federal government and society in connection with the Food and Nutrition Security Policy. Still in 2004, the 2nd National Conference on Food and Nutrition Security (II CNSAN) was held with the aim of involving the State and society in a joint effort to define the paths of this policy. In 2007, the 3rd Conference was held, during which the principles and guidelines of a National Food and Nutrition Security Policy were defined.

## INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGING THE ZERO HUNGER PROGRAM

Food and nutrition security consists in ensuring “food well-being” through a set of integrated and linked policies and actions meant to ensure, on a permanent basis, access to sufficiently appropriate food, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to meet the nutritional needs of all individuals in each phase or situation of their lives. It also presupposes that this food must be produced in a sustainable fashion, without harming future generations. Food and nutrition security involves four dimensions. The first one refers to the *quantity* of food, which can be characterized by the quantity of calories, proteins, vitamins and minerals consumed by human beings. The second one refers to the *quality* of the food that is consumed, which can be translated by the nutritional balance of food

and its sanitary quality. The third one refers to the *regularity* at which a person consumes food, which can be translated by eating at least three times a day every day. The fourth one refers to *dignity*, which can be translated into the freedom of people to choose their own food without dependence.

The necessary requirements for food and nutrition security are the following ones: sufficient *availability* of food, which presupposes an integrated food production and consumption system capable of ensuring a stable supply of essential food items for human consumption at affordable prices, produced in a sustainable way and sovereignly, meeting economic autonomy and independence requirements and preserving cultural traits and the environment; *accessibility* to food, which presupposes access to sufficient income to buy food, to essential public services, to information on quality nutrition and to social rights, implying reflections on the human right to adequate food.

This concept was established in Brazil during the 2nd National Conference on Food and Nutrition Security (II CNSAN) that was held in 2004 and it requires the involvement of the State and society in implementing a long-term public policy that includes strategies, programs and actions in areas such as: agrarian reform, promotion of family farming, production of staple food items consumed by the Brazilian population to ensure the human right to food, preservation of genetic resources, access to and use of natural resources and water, urban food supply and agriculture, income complementation, food supplementation, including in emergency situations, health and nutrition promotion and surveillance, nutrition education and promotion of healthy lifestyles.

In the understanding of the Conference participants, a National Food and Nutrition Security Policy consists in a set of planned actions intended to ensure food supply and access to food to all the population, so as to promote their nutrition and health. It should be sustainable, that is, it should be developed taking into account necessary conditions to ensure its continuity in the long run. It requires the involvement of both the government and organized civil society in their respective sectors or areas of action – health care, education, labor, agriculture, social development, environment, among others – and in different spheres – production, marketing, quality control, access and consumption. A National Food and Nutri-

tion Security Policy constitutes an advance in relation to the actions and programs developed by these segments because it promotes the following principles: (i) intersectoriality; (ii) joint actions between the State and society; (iii) equity, overcoming economic, social, gender and ethnic inequalities (which have been giving rise to discrimination mainly against black and indigenous people); (iv) linked budget and management; (v) comprehensiveness and linking up of structuring actions and emergency measures.

With a view to implementing this policy in practice, the Lula administration created a specific council linked to the Presidency of the Republic, the National Food and Nutritional Security Council (Consea) with a supra- and inter-sectoral status to be in charge of ensuring the feasibility of agreements entered into between the State and society to implement the Food and Nutrition Security Policy. It is a process under way on which the federal government has been focusing all efforts to build the necessary foundations for the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy to be consolidated like other policies, such as the health, social assistance, education or social security policies.

It is under this broader policy that actions against hunger are to be taken. The Zero Hunger Program is therefore a strategy of the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy focused on the population that is most vulnerable to hunger. Eradicating hunger and making it possible for all Brazilians who lack the income or other means to enjoy their human right to food to feed themselves appropriately and in a sustainable fashion were the main objectives of the Zero Hunger Program. The principle guiding this strategy is that access to food is a human and social right; and in order to ensure this right, it contemplates the implementation of a linked set of public policies (involving different ministries, the federal administration, states and municipalities) in the very short and long term and with the participation of civil society.

The integration of ministries in charge of implementing policies closely linked to the guidelines of the Zero Hunger Program made it possible to consolidate common objectives. The integration of the actions and resources of each ministry in the form of planned and linked activities created better possibilities for ensuring access to food, for expanding the production and consumption

of healthy food, for generating occupations and income and for improvements in schooling levels, in health indicators, in access to water supply, and in municipal infrastructure, all of this from the perspective of ensuring citizenship rights.

For this purpose, the creation of institutional means for the government to act in a cross-cutting fashion was fundamental for linking up the actions of each sector and ensuring a strong impact on eliminating the structural and emergency elements of the food vulnerability faced by families, avoiding the dispersion of resources.

A Working Group made up of representatives of all the ministries in charge of programs and actions against hunger was set up. Priority programs were redefined to become elements of a government strategy. A website was also organized for making information on the Zero Hunger Program available to the population in a systemic and non-sectoral way. In addition to the website, a direct communication channel was established with the population from the outset in the form of a toll-free hotline for the Zero Hunger Program.

A law was promulgated, the Food and Nutrition Security Law, which was jointly drawn up with society and unanimously passed by the Brazilian Parliament and sanctioned by our president, establishing the National Food and Nutrition Security System (Sisan). This system is being set up to integrate all policies related to food and nutrition security, comprising family farming and the provision of financings and technical assistance and assured procurement of the produce of family farmers to be directly used in social programs; cash transfer; access to food through subsidized restaurants; emergency distribution of food baskets; food banks.

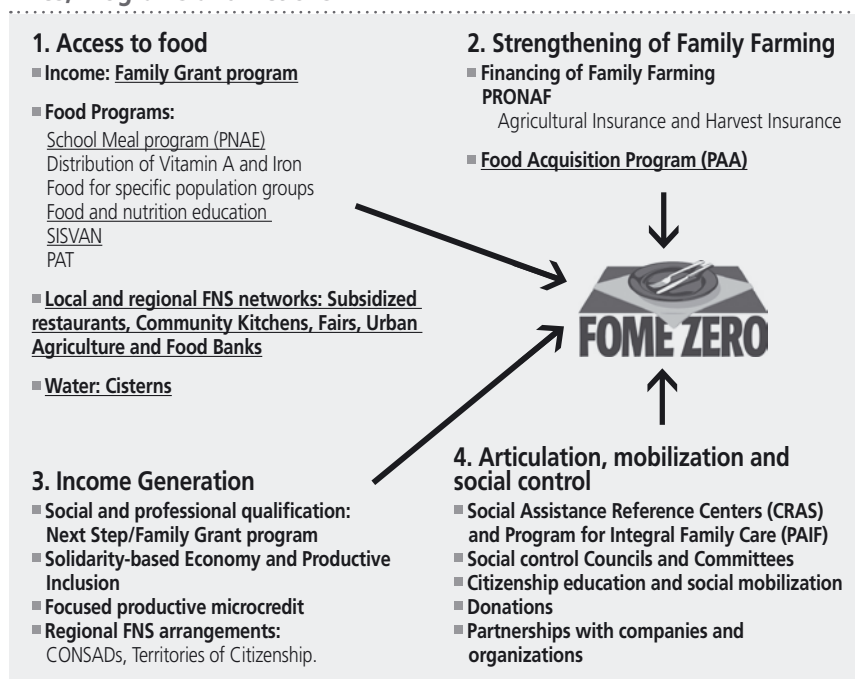
The system also comprises policies such as agrofood supply, fishing and aquiculture, agrarian reform, school meal program, healthy food habits, sanitation, etc. under the responsibility of other ministries. The system includes the Conference, Consea, and the Interministerial Food and Nutrition Security Chamber.

In 2010, the right to food was included in the Brazilian Constitution as a social right. Therefore, we now rely on a comprehensive legal tool to guarantee the implementation of all the integrated actions of the Zero Hunger Program. The right to food is now a constitutional right in Brazil.

## AXES, PROGRAMS AND ACTIONS

As illustrated below, the actions of the Zero Hunger Program fall under four articulating axes: Expanded Access to Food, Strengthening of Family Farming, Promotion of Productive Inclusion and Articulation, and Mobilization Processes. It was design this way for organizational purposes only. All programs are elements of the same strategy, and none of them, individually, would be able to achieve the target of reducing hunger to zero. The Zero Hunger Program is not the sum of its parts, but rather the integration and synergy generated by this integration process.

### Axes, Programs and Actions



### FIRST AXIS: ACCESS TO FOOD

Apart from increasing the purchasing power of the minimum wage on a continued basis, with repercussions on the amounts paid in retirement pensions and social assistance benefits, and from increasing the availability of jobs, the first axis of the Zero Hunger Program implemented actions directly aimed at increasing the access of

the low-income population to food. The first action was the immediate establishment and rapid expansion of a cash transfer program, the *Bolsa Família* (Family Grant) Program. Access to food was also enhanced by remodeling and expanding the school meal program and supporting the expansion of public facilities such as subsidized restaurants and food banks. The Family Grant Program, the largest cash transfer program of the federal government, assists 12.650 million poor and extremely poor families<sup>6</sup>, involving about 48 million people.

These families receive, in average, R\$ 94.00 (US\$ 56) a month. Between 2003 and 2008, the Program's budget was significantly increased, from R\$ 3.2 billion (US\$ 1.9 billion) to R\$ 10.5 billion (US\$ 6.1 billion). Studies show that the cash transferred to them and the meals served in schools to their children are the main means to ensure access to food to low-income families<sup>7</sup>. The families assisted by the Family Grant program spend their income mainly with food; with average monthly expenses amounting to R\$ 200.00 (US\$ 118). To receive the benefit, these families must be willing to participate in the educational and health care processes of their children, thus establishing a link with the Unified Health System (SUS) and the educational system of the country.

Up to 2008, the National School Meal Program ensured that an average of approximately 35 million free-of-charge meals were served every day in public schools throughout Brazil to children in the 0-14 age bracket in primary and lower secondary schools, including day-care centers and pre-schools<sup>8</sup>. In 2009, with the inclusion in the Program of students in upper secondary education and of those covered by the Youth and Adult Education Program, it is estimated that 47 million meals are now being served in schools every day. In 2010, the federal budget for this action contemplated a spending of R\$ 3 billion (US\$ 1.75 billion). Since the beginning of the Lula administration, the daily per capita amount transferred to state and municipal governments was raised by 130 %, from R\$ 0.13

6. The Family Grant program assists families with a monthly per capita income of up to R\$ 140.00 (US\$ 82), and families with a per capita income of up to R\$ 70.00 (US\$ 41) are considered extremely poor.

7. In this regard, see *Repercussões do Programa Bolsa Família na Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional das Famílias Beneficiadas: relatório síntese* (Rio de Janeiro: Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analyses - IBASE, 2008).

8. Education in Brazil is divided into two main levels: basic and higher education. Basic education involves three stages: Children's Education, for children aged up to 5 in day-care centers (0-3 years old) and pre-schools (4-5 years old); Primary and lower secondary education, which is compulsory for students aged between 6 and 14 years old; and upper secondary education, which lasts for three years. Higher education is available to students from the age of 18.

to R\$ 0.30, per student. This amount was also doubled for indigenous and *Quilombo* communities.

Mention should also be made of the Workers' Food Program, a food complementation program for low-income workers implemented through companies, which are granted tax incentives for this purpose. This program assists 11.8 million workers and involves tax waivers in the order of R\$ 485 million (US\$ 285 million) a year. This total amount represents a coverage rate of 34 % of all workers in the formal labor market.

In addition, a set of food and nutrition public facilities is being implemented in many cities in Brazil, such as subsidized restaurants (90 units where almost 200,000 people eat every day), food banks (104 units covering almost 1 million people) and community kitchens (645 units benefiting about 140,000 people). These facilities are operated based on innovative educational methodologies that reduce food wastage and promote healthy food habits and social mobilization, apart from stimulating the adoption of decentralized food and nutrition security policies at the local level.

The Vitamin Supplementation Program has achieved the following results: coverage of 634.9 thousand children aged from 6 to 11 months; coverage of 3.04 million children aged from 12 to 59 months; and coverage of 203.3 thousand mothers in the immediate post-delivery period. 539 municipalities reported data on the evolution of this program. The Iron Supplementation Program hit the mark of 330,000 supplements distributed to children aged from 6 to 18 months and 220,000 supplements to pregnant women.

The Zero Hunger Program also develops innovative programs with great potential to grow in scale. One of these is a program to build cisterns in the Brazilian semi-arid region, a region where it only rains four months a year and which is marked by the lowest social indicators in the country. Using a regionally developed technology and with the active participation of the beneficiaries, over 294,000 cisterns have been built already to capture rainwater. As a result, over 1.186 million people have access to quality water in their homes in the region now.

## **SECOND AXIS: STRENGTHENING FAMILY FARMING**

The second axis of the Zero Hunger Strategy is aimed at strengthening family farming, which is predominant in most agri-

cultural establishments in Brazil and accounts for most of the domestic food supply. Albeit virtually consensual, the importance of family farming in the process of building the National Food and Nutrition Security System and Policy in Brazil continues to raise issues that are under intense discussions. This is due to different points of view between civil society organizations, governments and the private initiative on the coexistence of different agricultural models, i.e. family farming and industrial farming (or agribusiness), a coexistence that is also institutionally expressed in two ministries, namely, the ministries of Agriculture and Agrarian Development. Although it occupies only one-fourth of the area occupied by agribusiness, family farming accounts for 38 % of the production value (R\$ 54.4 billion (US\$ 32 billion)) in Brazil, according to data of the 2006 Agriculture/Livestock Census (IBGE). Despite the fact that it occupies a smaller area than industrial farming, it can be said that family farming is the main pillar of food security in the country, as it accounts for the following percentages of the domestic production: cassava: 87 %; beans: 70 %; corn: 46 %; coffee: 38 %; rice: 34 %; milk: 58 %; swine: 59 %; poultry: 50 %; bovine cattle: 30 %; and wheat: 21 %. Still according to the Census, it is also the main generator of jobs in Brazil, concentrating 12.3 million workers, or 74.4 % of all occupied people in rural areas.

Anyway, right at the beginning of the Zero Hunger Program, a specific Harvest Plan was defined for this farming category that included, on the one hand, the expansion of the existing credit program – the National Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming (Pronaf). This is a credit program exclusively designed for family farming and largely focused on food production. Its recent expansion led it to hit the mark of almost two million credit contracts in the 2008-2009 harvest, involving an estimated sum of R\$ 13 billion (US\$ 7.64 billion). About 60 % of its operations involve poor rural families, including family farmers, families settled under the agrarian reform program, and traditional peoples and communities.

On the other hand, at the suggestion of Consea, the Family Farming Food Acquisition Program (PAA) was created as a major example of an inter-sectoral program that establishes links between the supply of food produced under family farming schemes and demand for food for public programs and facilities (school meal program, hospitals, free-of-charge distribution of food products,

chains, etc.) and also for establishing food stocks. The PAA will be described in detail below.

As part of the axis focused on rural areas and their populations, the focus on Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) was also gradually incorporated into a series of other actions designed to ensure access to water to rural families living in the semi-arid region, specifically to indigenous peoples and black rural *Quilombo* communities<sup>9</sup>, while protecting socio-biodiversity and traditional knowledge.

### THIRD AXIS: PROMOTION OF INCOME-GENERATING PROCESSES

The Promotion of Income-Generating Processes stimulated a solidarity-based economy and involved actions to build the capacity of the low-income population as a means to contribute to their inclusion in the labor market.

In 2003, the federal government created the National Solidarity-Based Economy Secretariat as an agency linked to the Ministry of Labor. Since then, this secretariat has been implementing the “Solidarity Economy in Development” Program, with the aim of meeting the main demands of Solidarity-based Economic Undertakings through access to financial goods and services, infrastructure, knowledge – training, advisory, technical assistance and organization of production and marketing processes.

Between 2005 and 2008, 1,500 community agents were trained and there are now 532 agents monitoring approximately 700 solidarity-based undertakings involving 45,000 workers of both sexes in the 27 states of the Federation.

Various partnerships with the federal government are being implemented under this axis. Among these, special mention should be made of a partnership with the Banco do Brasil Foundation, through which innovative work- and income-generating solidarity-based economy initiatives were implemented. Up till 2008, 150 projects have been supported, directly benefiting 4,300 undertakings with 136,000 workers and over 2 million indirectly in 720 municipalities. Another major partnership was the one established with Banco do Nordeste do Brasil (BNB) to support organizations that operate with Solidarity-based Revolving Funds, through which financial resources

9. Communities whose members claim to be descendants of runaway African slaves of the past.

were made available to ensure the feasibility of associative and sustainable productive actions. Between 2005 and 2008, fifty projects were supported with an investment of R\$ 5 million, directly benefiting about 700 solidarity-based economic undertakings involving 7,000 participating families. Up till 2008, 44 community banks were set up in the outskirts of urban areas, *Quilombo* communities and rural municipalities, ensuring solidarity-based financings to about 5,000 people and promoting the inclusion of another 10,000 families in the banking system.

Another initiative is the National Program in Support to Technological Incubators of Grassroots Cooperatives (Proninc). This program promoted a significant expansion in incubators in Brazilian universities. In partnership with various ministries and federal agencies, 76 university incubators were supported between 2003 and 2008, benefiting approximately 700 solidarity-based economic undertakings, involving about 10,000 associated workers of both sexes.

Another initiative toward the same objective is the *Próximo Passo* (Next Step) program, which consists in an interministerial action conceived to promote social and professional qualification in the construction and tourist industries. This program is being implemented through the ministries of Labor and Employment (MTE), Social Development and Hunger Combat (MDS), and Tourism (MTur) jointly with state and municipal governments, entrepreneurs and workers. Involving investments of R\$ 20 million, its goal is to provide professional training to about 26,000 workers covered by the Family Grant program in 21 states and in the Federal District.

Through professional learning, the program's objective was promoting the qualified professional inclusion of workers as an entry door to the world of labor, as well as fostering income generation in the tourist industry. The courses delivered under this program can be attended by people aged 18 and above from families covered by the Family Grant program who have completed, at least, the 4<sup>th</sup> grade of primary education.

#### **FOURTH AXIS: LINKS, MOBILIZATION AND GRASSROOTS PARTICIPATION**

Various partnerships have been entered into with the federal government for holding campaigns against hunger and for food and nutrition security. Over one hundred partnerships have been

established. This axis also provides citizenship education through mobilization actions and citizenship development.

After the Zero Hunger Strategy was launched, in 2003, a major initiative associated with the set of public policies intended to eradicate hunger and extreme poverty was taken: an initiative to develop a training and capacity-building process on food and nutrition security for vulnerable populations based on their different realities. *Talher Nacional* (literally, national flatware), which today is called Citizenship Education Network, and the Sister Schools Program, both of which are linked to the Office of the Special Advisor to the President, were charged with organizing social mobilization actions. This initiative, under way in the 26 states of Brazil and in the Federal District through state, micro-regional and municipal *Talher Nacional* networks, relies on the support and voluntary adhesion of thousands of grassroots educators, in addition to 112 grassroots educators of the civil service who were allowed to take part in the initiative under public agreements and partnerships with civil society. The Sister Schools Program, established under the Zero Hunger Program, involves public and private schools in actions designed to promote appreciation for people and citizenship rights and foster social inclusion.

Thanks to the intense work of volunteers, the Citizenship Education Network reached 1,500 Brazilian municipalities and involved about 300,000 people in training and capacity-building processes in FNS and social and human rights between 2004 and 2009. The main results of this activity, include, among others, the strengthening and creation of food security forums and councils; creation of itinerant family farming and solidarity-based grassroots economy open-air markets; work initiatives with indigenous people, *Quilombo* communities, women, waste pickers and recyclers of different materials; incentives to creating food security and local development consortia; monitoring and social control of the Family Grant program and of other public policies; strengthening of territorial policies; creation of grassroots education centers with the beneficiary families of the Zero Hunger Program and families facing social vulnerability; mobilization of educators and families to attend food and nutrition security conferences and to take part in discussions on FNS laws and in mobilizations to press for their passage.

Another measure is the integration of socially vulnerable families into mobilization and information spaces. The distribution of 92

million primers on food and nutrition security to the Brazilian population, focusing on low-income families and students, is also an example of articulation and mobilization. In addition, 1.4 million *Cadernos do Professor* (teacher's manuals) and 6,000 pedagogic kits on healthy food habits were distributed. At the same time that it provides information to the families, this action fosters access to adequate food.

The families covered by these programs are also assisted by the Unified Social Assistance System through the social protection and promotion network. The Social Assistance Reference Centers (Cras) provide social and psychological counseling to the families, apart from identifying their demands and referring them to other more complex levels of the system's hierarchy. These more complex levels include specific centers for dealing with violations of rights, such as child labor and sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, and for assisting more vulnerable populations, elderly people, poor disabled children and adults, street dwellers, etc.

This policy is monitored by a National Food and Nutritional Security Council made up of 18 ministers of State and 36 civil society representatives directly linked to the Presidency of the Republic.

### ADVANCES AND CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING FOOD AND NUTRITION INSECURITY

The increasing priority attached by the federal government to tackling poverty and food insecurity in Brazil is revealed by the significant improvements observed in the country's social indicators. As a result, the data shown in Table 1 reveal a sharp decrease in the percentage of the total population living in poverty and, more intensely, of those living in extreme poverty. One can also observe a decrease in income inequalities, although Brazil continues to be one of the most unequal countries in the world. Income inequalities decreased by 8% since 1997 (*Table 1*).

As a result of a higher per capita income ensured to the poorest segments of the population, Brazil was able to reduce poverty and, particularly, extreme poverty between 2003 and 2008, making it possible for extreme poverty to be reduced by half its level in 2003; therefore, in five years the First Millennium Development Goal (MDG) was achieved before the deadline – which would be 25 years (*Graph 1*).

Brazil has already achieved the Millennium Goal of reducing extreme poverty by half, which was supposed to be achieved by 2015. In 1992, 11.7 % of the population lived with less than 1

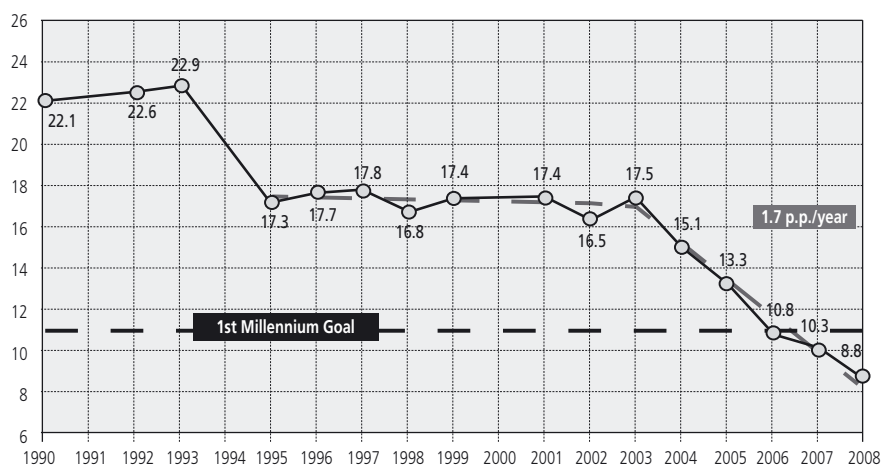
**Table 1 – Social indicators, Brazil, 1997 and 2007**

| Indicator                                                 | 1997          | 2007         | 2007/1997 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------|
| Gini index                                                | 0.600         | 0.552        | -8%       |
| Poverty                                                   | 48.1%         | 30.3%        | -37%      |
| Extreme poverty                                           | 24.7%         | 11.5%        | -53%      |
| Child undernutrition (growth deficit in children under 5) | 13%<br>(1996) | 7%<br>(2006) | -46%      |

Source: MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS. *Food and nutrition sovereignty and security in Brazil: innovative public policies*. High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All, Madrid, January, 26-27, 2009.

dollar a day; in 2006, this figure had dropped to 4.7 %, according to a Report of the Presidency of the Republic. Given these facts, the country has set a new goal, namely, that of reducing extreme poverty to 1/4 by 2015, with the ultimate aim of eradicating hunger and extreme poverty.

**Graph 1 – Brazil, Evolution of extreme poverty, 2001-2008**



It can also be seen that there was a decrease in income inequality in Brazil. Cash transfers under social programs accounted for 28 % of the decrease in inequality registered over this period. The Family

Grant Program accounted for 21 % of this decrease and the Continuous Cash Benefit<sup>10</sup> (*Benefício de Prestação Continuada* - BPC) for 7 %.

The impacts of the recent world food and economic crises on Brazil were mitigated by a higher family farming production rate (today, family farming accounts for 70 % of all the food consumed in Brazil) supported by various public policies (Pronaf, PAA and the More Food Program). Policies with an impact on access to food were added to these policies as well, namely: steady increases in the minimum wage and immediate corresponding adjustment of the per capita amount transferred to families under the *Bolsa Família* program.

The impact of these programs on the population's food and nutrition security can be perceived in the fact that the risk of a family assisted by the Family Grant program having a child affected by chronic undernutrition drops by 31 %. For children aged between 6 and 11 months, this percentage is even higher: 62 %. The benefit is mainly used for buying food. Nine of each ten families reported that their access to food had improved; seven of each ten families said that they were consuming a larger variety of food items and nine of each ten children are having three or more meals a day.

The increase in the purchasing power of these families has an impact on local development and on reducing regional inequalities. The cash transfer to the families has major effects on local economies, as it creates new work and income opportunities.

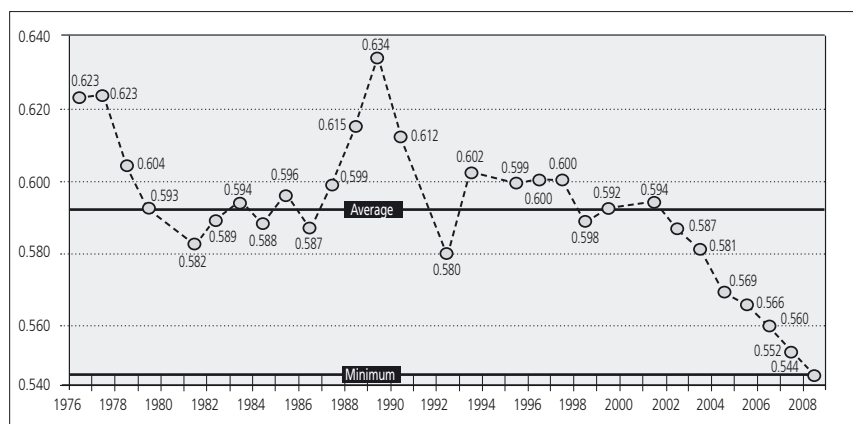
The cash transfers to elderly and disabled people (BPC) account for significant percentages of all constitutional cash transfers to municipalities, ranging from 12.5 % to 27.1 %, the latter also in the Brazilian northeast region.

The *Bolsa Família* program increases the income of the families covered by it by 29.2 %. In the northeast region the increase amounts to 34.4 % and 57 % of the population of the semi-arid region is covered by the *Bolsa Família* Program.

Between 2003 and 2006, poverty was reduced by 31.4 %. In 2003, 28.17 % of the population were below the poverty line. In 2006, 19.31 % of the population were below the poverty line. Fourteen million people rose above poverty over this period.

10. The Continuous Cash Benefit (BPC) is a right enshrined in the Federal Constitution that ensures a monthly minimum wage to elderly people aged 65 and above and to disabled people of any age who cannot lead an independent life or work and who confirmedly have no means of livelihood or a family with the means to support them. In both cases, the gross monthly per capita household income must be lower than the minimum wage in force.

**Graph 2 – Evolution of inequality in the per capita household income according to the Gini index: Brazil, 1976-2008**



Source: Estimates based on the 1976-2008 National Household Sample Surveys.

Brazil's economy has been growing, benefiting all its population, mainly its poorest segments. In 2006, the income of Brazilians rose, in average, by 9.16 % as compared to 2005. For the poorest 40 % it rose by 12 %, while for the richest 10 % it increased by 7.85 %.

We are managing to reduce poverty and inequality simultaneously. Graph 2 shows the evolution of inequality in the Brazilian per capita income. In 2008, income concentration in the country dropped to its lowest level in the past 30 years.

## THE ZERO HUNGER PROGRAM AND THE STEPPING UP OF INTER-SECTORAL APPROACHES

One of the main expressions of the inter-sectoral focus of FNS, guided by the principles of the human right to adequate food and food sovereignty, is the linking up of actions to promote access to food and actions focused on strengthening family farming. For this reason, special mention should be made of the Family Farming Food Acquisition Program (PAA), of the National School Meal Program (Pnae) in its new design, and of the Family Grant Cash Transfer (*Bolsa Família* Program), which are three major achievements of the Zero Hunger Strategy.

## **FOOD ACQUISITION PROGRAM (PAA)**

This program was established in 2003 based on a Consea's proposal and as an element of the Zero Hunger Strategy, which was regulated by law in 2008. The PAA relies on a shared management arrangement between the MDS and the MDA and is implemented in partnership with the National Food Supply Company, states and municipalities. It consists in direct government procurement of food from family farmers, from people settled under the agrarian reform program, and from traditional peoples and communities to supply programs meant to assist populations facing food insecurity, to distribute food free of charge to populations facing more extreme situations of social vulnerability, and to establish strategic government stocks. The program has two main objectives: supporting the marketing of the agricultural/livestock produce of family farmers, stimulating food production, and providing easier access to these food products to families facing food insecurity. It is an action aimed at developing closer bonds between farmers and consumers. The food bought from family farmers' associations with the operational support from state and municipal governments and from the National Food Supply Company is donated to supply the social protection and promotion network and public facilities such as subsidized restaurants, food banks and community kitchens, as well as to supply the public school network and to be used in food baskets distributed by the MDS.

Since it was implemented, in 2003, up till December 2008, the federal government allocated R\$ 2 billion (US\$ 1.18 billion) to the PAA, which were used to buy about 2 million tons of food products. In 2008, a total of 118.9 thousand farmers sold their produce to the PAA to be donated to about 16.8 million people.

## **NATIONAL SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM (PNAE)**

In June 2009, a law was sanctioned providing for new implementation guidelines and modalities for the National School Meal Program (Pnae). This is the oldest Brazilian food program, dating back from when it was proposed by Josué de Castro<sup>11</sup> in the 1940s. The law innovates by stating that the provision of meals in basic education schools is a right of students and by creating an insti-

tutional link between meals served in public schools and family farmers in the region where they are located. Of all funds transferred by the federal government, at least 30 % are to be used to procure food directly from family farmers.

It should be mentioned that the process of drawing up the bill that resulted in the law and the negotiations on its contents that preceded its passage by the National Congress were marked by the intense participation of society.

Today, family farming relies on an institutional market (government procurement) of at least R\$ 600 million (US\$ 353 million) a year or more, if purchases exceed the 30 % minimum. Also worthy of mention is the role played by the experience developed in the PAA in shaping the guidelines of the Pnae, which incorporated family farmers as suppliers.

### **CASH TRANSFER PROGRAM WITH HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MONITORING – THE *BOLSA FAMÍLIA* PROGRAM**

This is the largest cash transfer program with health care, education and social assistance monitoring mechanisms in the developing world, covering about 42 million poor people today and ensuring a basic income to 12.650 million families with a monthly per capita income of R\$ 120. The program, which is available in all Brazilian municipalities, consists in a cash transfer mechanism designed for poor families, who must satisfy certain citizenship-related conditionalities in the fields of education and health care to be eligible.

The monthly cash grant ranges from R\$ 22.00 to R\$ 200.00, according to the per capita income and to the household composition. The benefit is directly transferred to the families through a magnetic card that can be used in bank branches, lottery houses or banking correspondents. In 2010, the average amount paid to beneficiary families was R\$ 94.00.

The conditionalities for eligibility that are monitored are school attendance of children and adolescents (who must attend at

11. A doctor, professor, geographer, sociologist and politician, Josué de Castro took up the cause of fighting hunger as his life's mission. He had a deep influence on the national life and became an internationally known personality between 1930 and 1973. He devoted most of his time and talent to draw attention to the problem of hunger and extreme poverty that prevailed and, unfortunately, still prevails in the world.

least 85% of their class days), proper immunization, child development, and prenatal visits of pregnant women to a health facility. The ministries of Health and Education are key partners in implementing the program, as they are in charge of monitoring compliance with its conditionalities in their respective areas of competency, of systematizing information provided by municipalities, and of referring them to the Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Combat.

Access to health care services and to school is a citizenship right. The main purpose of monitoring non-compliance with the program's conditionalities is to detect situations of greater social vulnerability and guide the actions of public authorities toward ensuring rights, and not just to suspend the cash grant if irregularities are spotted.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND SOME CHALLENGES

The main innovation of the Zero Hunger Program is the degree of priority it attaches to fighting extreme poverty and hunger in the domestic agenda. To ensure this priority, it was necessary to consider territorial aspects and to ensure closer coordination and integration between ministries in the process of defining, planning, implementing and monitoring actions designed to enhance social inclusion and citizenship rights, such as those aimed at providing increased access to food, expanding the production and consumption of healthy food products, raising school attendance rates, improving health conditions, improving access to sanitation and water supply, and generating jobs and income.

Another innovative aspect was the link that was established between structuring actions and emergency measures, as was done in the Family Grant, School Meal, Strengthening of Family Farming (particularly through the Family Farming Insurance and Harvest Insurance) and the Family Agriculture Food Acquisition programs or in actions such as building cisterns and distributing food to specific population groups.

Special mention should be made of society's participation in and control of the process, whether through the National Food and Nutritional Security Council (Consea), linked to the Presidency of the Republic, or through social control councils set up at the fed-

eral, state and municipal levels and mobilization and citizenship education actions.

But integrating the Food Security Councils proposed for public control processes, which are already under way in our country, poses a new challenge. This is a task to be carried out by all the sectors involved: devising alternative and creative ways to bring together and integrate the different existing councils in the areas of health care, social assistance, children's and adolescents' protection, etc., preserving the identity and specific features of each one of them while integrating them into a more mature and unified grassroots social participation process.

There is great synergy between the Zero Hunger Program and the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The key objective of the Zero Hunger Program is the first of the eight Millennium Development Goals – that of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. But the Zero Hunger Program also contributes to the achievement of four other millennium goals: achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, and improve maternal health.

It should also be highlighted that a food and nutrition security policy intended to foster human development in all its aspects must take into account the need to ensure the population's right to choose. Ensuring access to necessary information, mainly on healthy food habits, is a must for the population to choose their own food. There will be no empowerment of the population if it cannot manage its own processes.

Brazil is experiencing a very favorable moment to consolidate public actions in the area of food and nutrition and paving the way for a new approach in public management in this area. There seems to be a very direct link between the process of building a Food and Nutrition Security Policy and the need to redesign the State. The more measures are taken to ensure an appropriate integration between the various areas dealing with this topic, the more various partnerships are promoted – intergovernmental partnerships involving the three spheres of government, partnerships with civil society and the private initiative – and the more channels for grassroots participation and public control over actions of the State are promoted, the greater the possibility of actually consolidating this policy.

In this process, apart from naturally hard choices regarding the allocation of scant resources, it was necessary to constantly bear in mind the need to make sure that this integration between the different areas would be promoted in the most harmonious way possible. It was thus necessary to build consensuses, use leadership wisely, and create appropriate spaces for articulation and integration.

For this purpose, the Zero Hunger Program presented positive prospects for the integration between food and nutrition security and other public policies. The three intervention axes proposed by this policy pointed out concrete possibilities for integrating these areas: the first one by implementing integrated public policies in the food area. The second one by creating channels for grassroots participation in the process of building a National Food and Nutrition Security Policy. And the third one by involving the population in a large self-help ethic action against hunger and mobilizing society around alternatives for fighting hunger in Brazil.

In addition to the institutionalization of social policies, the efforts to overcome poverty were marked by an inter-sectoral approach. However, this unification involves more than bureaucratic aspects, considering that the programs are linked to one another and operate with a view to developing a synergistic relationship, which requires political actions integrated in a cross-cutting fashion around the common focus of fostering food and nutrition security.

Experience has shown that, because it failed to redistribute the income, economic growth in the past was insufficient to create solid domestic markets and lay the foundations for sustainable development. Inequality and poverty are causes – and not consequences – of underdevelopment.

However, one should not lose sight of the following: economic growth is not an end in itself; and economic growth cannot take place in the absence of certain conditions and of limits to ensure environmental and social sustainability. Sustainable growth presupposes the increasing reduction of inequalities. For economic growth to be sustainable, access to basic goods and services must be increased until universal access to them is ensured, taking advantage of the remarkable potential of the Brazilian domestic market.

The Brazilian Government is aware that the social agenda is intrinsic and complementary to the economic agenda. Without human promotion and capacity-building, we will not be able to produce a

permanent cycle of sustainable growth that can yield equitable benefits to the entire population.

Therefore, the fight against poverty in Brazil is part of an integral development approach where social inclusion is the path to ensure sustainable growth and realize the full potential of people. This is a development approach based on the notion that social, economic and environmental aspects walk hand-in-hand to establish communities, strengthen the economy, and foster respect for nature. It is a new, integral development model led by inclusion, according to which human beings are both the subjects and the purpose of an environmentally sustainable and socially fair economic activity that is not intended to promote the private accumulation of capital.

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## 5. MOBILIZATION OF ENTERPRISES AROUND THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER<sup>1</sup>

*Walter Belik*

### INTRODUCTION

Much emphasis has been placed on public food and nutrition security policies, but eradicating hunger is a project that requires the involvement of society at large. In all countries that have passed laws to ensure food security, recognition of the Human Right to Food came about as a result of civil society's mobilization. Entrepreneurs are some of the most outstanding actors in society with a significant power to mobilize it, whose challenge lies in promoting social, environmental and economic sustainability.

In international terms and in the spirit that guided the goals of the 1996 World Food Summit and of the 2000 Millennium Summit, large enterprises established the Global Compact at the initiative of the United Nations Organization. This pact was initially signed by 500 multinational companies, but this figure has grown to 5,300 companies in 130 countries<sup>2</sup>. In recent years, the participation of private corporations in the pact, apart from that of other organizations, became an element of differentiation in reaffirming the commitments and social and environmental responsibility of enterprises. Of the ten principles agreed upon in this pact, the first two deserve special mention, as they involve the human rights issue and, consequently, the need to promote healthy food and good relations with the communities in which enterprises operate.

In Brazil, 345 enterprises and associations signed the Global Compact, but many others have been addressing topics such as food, nutrition and fighting poverty. After the Zero Hunger Program was launched, early in 2003, the interest of enterprises

1. This text is an updated and revised version of the third and fourth parts of the manual *Como as empresas podem apoiar e participar do combate à fome* (How companies can support and participate in the fight against hunger), by Belik (edited by the Ethos Institute, São Paulo-state of São Paulo, 2003).

2. See <<http://www.unglobalcompact.org/ParticipantsAndStakeholders/index.html>>.

in participating in food security projects has grown. Likewise, although the Zero Hunger Program was launched by the federal government, it took into account the need to involve the private initiative in its actions as an element of civil society. Moreover, since 2003 various segments of the corporate sector began to be directly represented in Consea – the National Food and Nutritional Security Council. Therefore, apart from activities that companies might have been developing internally, these began to be integrated into public projects at the three governmental levels.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is more comprehensive than sporadic actions in support of tackling problems faced by society that can raise the profile of the corporate world. CSR presupposes changes in the culture of a company as a living organism in society that must be healthy and sustainable. For this reason, the launching of the Zero Hunger Program was seen both as a dynamizing element for companies that were already socially active in addressing the food issue and as a major opportunity for reorienting the actions of other companies that were tackling other issues.

When the first version of this manual was prepared, the new federal administration had launched the Zero Hunger Program in 2003 and companies were very much interested in joining actions that were being discussed by society as a whole. Later on, a group of highly responsible companies set up a specific association to encourage actions to promote food security. This association was called Apoio Fome Zero (Zero Hunger Support Association) in 2003 and has gained recognition since then for its projects in the areas of school meals, water storage (cisterns) in the Brazilian northeastern semiarid region, and capacity-building for social actors.

The following sections will address the same line of policies contained in the Zero Hunger Project, namely: structural, specific (or sectoral) and local policies. The purpose is to show how enterprises can act taking into account the three dimensions involved in public policies. Several other elements involved in the management of an enterprise will also be addressed: its stakeholders, its relationship with suppliers and consumers, and its relationship with employees and collaborators.

## STRUCTURAL POLICIES AGAINST HUNGER

The Zero Hunger Project uses the term structural policies to refer to actions aimed at raising people's income and reducing social inequalities. These policies, which include, for example, job- and income-generating programs, are applied to priority areas of government intervention. However, enterprises can also act in these areas, promoting social inclusion.

Income distribution cannot, in itself, ensure the well-being of the poor population if it cannot be sustained in some fashion in the long run. In order to ensure social inclusion, poor people must rely on a livelihood base. This base can consist in controlling an "asset" that can leverage income in the future or at least in the possession of goods that can reduce the percentage of their income that is spent with rent, real estate instalment payments or interest paid to loan sharks.

The State must act to sustain people's income by promoting minimum income programs and unemployment insurance schemes, expanding the social security and pension system, etc. Among other public policies designed to sustain improvements in income, special mention should be made of the agrarian reform program and of the financing of assets at low interest rates by the BNDES – National Economic and Social Development Bank – and by the official bank network. However, although the responsibility for these structural policies lies with the State, the private initiative can contribute a lot.

## SOLIDARITY-BASED MICROCREDIT AGENCIES

The main action that enterprises can launch is that of setting up and participating in solidarity-based microcredit agencies. This is also an alternative for many companies that are not in the business of lending money and have no vocation for such activity. Microcredit agencies are autonomous organizations established by local community members – whether employees of a company or not – who lend minimum amounts for poor people to set up or expand a business, renovate their homes, or buy a bicycle or another good. Microcredit experiences have been sufficiently documented and the official banks that operate in this area confirm that the results are very satisfactory.

Data show that the default rate on microcredit is very low and that the social return on this kind of investment is rewarding. Loans granted under the microcredit system amount to about R\$ 1,000 and are preferably granted to women. The BNDES is authorized to grant microcredit loans for informal activities (which account for 77 % of all micro-entrepreneurs included in the bank's portfolio).

Solidarity-based credit experiences are particularly important and successful when it comes to family farming. In Brazil's south region, a network of microcredit agencies that finance production and marketing schemes of family farmers is already available. This credit is "making all the difference" in regions where official credit is not available in the right amount and where farmers have few production and marketing alternatives.

### **INCOME SUPPLEMENTATION AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Enterprises can also take part in structural measures by participating in income supplementation programs designed for poor families that provide direct assistance to school-age children and young people. Different programs are under way supported by the fiscal law and focused on supporting children and adolescents. In these cases, enterprises can make direct contributions to funds managed by the Municipal, State and National Councils for the Rights of Children and Adolescents. These actions free up the income of people at risk for other uses, ensuring families greater access to food.

Other structural actions that free up the income of families at risk for other purposes can be very positive, even if they don't involve direct investments in the food area. Enterprises can develop different actions to improve the income of their employees or assist the communities in which they operate by, for example, providing financial support for them to build homes themselves, granting scholarships to young sons and daughters of employees or community members, and sponsoring and setting up food or construction cooperatives.

### **SPECIFIC POLICIES AGAINST HUNGER**

Companies can take decisive actions to reinforce specific policies against hunger, those that have a direct bearing on the quantity, quality and regularity of the food consumed by Brazil-

ians. The main program included in the Zero Hunger Project for this purpose is the *Cupom Alimentação* (Food Stamp) program. The food stamp or card program was conceived to complement policies in support of the income of the population at risk, such as the *Bolsa Escola* (school grant), *Bolsa Trabalho* (work grant), Unemployment Insurance policies and others. The proposal of the food stamp or card program was inspired by the US Food Stamp Program (FSP). Later on, at the end of 2003, the food card proposal was incorporated into the Family Grant Program, which combined all the other federal cash transfer programs into a single one.

### Box 1 – The Food Stamp Program model

Fighting hunger without welfarism while fostering the economy back to growth was the challenge launched by president Roosevelt in the middle of the economic recession of the early 1930s in the United States. Each poor American family was granted the right to receive food stamps to buy food in registered establishments for a certain period. Under federal administration since 1962, the Food Stamp Program is the United States' largest food aid program. Early in the decade, it covered 7.3 million households and 17.2 million people a month at a cost of US\$ 17 billion.

The gross monthly income of applicants for the program must be equal to or below 130% of the poverty line (US\$ 1,533 a month currently for a three-member family, for example). In addition, the assisted families must not have assets (bank deposits, financial investments and other goods) totaling more than US\$ 2,000 or US\$ 3,000, if at least one of their members is over 60 years old. Selected applicants are required to have a job, to be looking for a job, or to be attending a training program. If none of these requirements is complied with, those registered in the program are only allowed to receive the benefit for a maximum period of 3 months at 3-year intervals. If a family has no income, it can receive stamps amounting to US\$ 341 a month (data for a three-member family in 2001). In 2000, the average monthly benefit amounted to US\$ 73 per person and to almost US\$ 173 per family. The stamps cannot be exchanged for money. In addition, they cannot be used to buy alcoholic beverages, cigarettes and non-food items. The retail establishments that take the stamps are closely inspected. Any non-compliance on their part is subject to disqualification from the program, civil lawsuits and even closure.

## **THE BRAZILIAN CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAM**

Implementing a food stamp-based cash transfer program along the lines of the American FSP is an important tool to fight hunger in Brazil. Considering information contained in the Unified Social Assistance Record, which was built based on information on families at risk collected by municipalities, it can be said that a very well-defined focus was adopted to enable Brazil's poorest families to access cash transfers and, consequently, to boost local economies. The program beneficiaries are required to satisfy certain social requirements during the period in which they receive the benefit. These include attending professional refresher courses or literacy courses, keeping their children at school, keeping up-to-date immunization records for their children, engaging in community activities, etc.

The Brazilian program does not allow enterprises to participate financially in the cash transfer system. However, all donations in cash are earmarked for the Fund for Combating and Eradicating Poverty. Similarly to what was observed in the US Food Stamp Program, frauds in the use of food stamps are expected to be minimized through the adoption of magnetic cards. Contrary to what one would imagine, the fact that these communities are located in more isolated areas allows them to control retailers and stall holders in open-air markets more closely, avoiding embezzlement of funds and corruption.

In all the program's actions, the collaboration of enterprises and their staff as volunteers in delivering courses, in professional training initiatives and in carrying out health inspections will be very useful. In many cases, enterprises can also make available facilities, training rooms, materials and machines for delivering technical courses. Some companies are already supporting voluntary actions by releasing employees to take part in community activities during part of their working time. The idea is to expand these possibilities and link them up.

## **EXPANSION OF THE WORKERS' FOOD PROGRAM**

An important specific measure to fight hunger was adopting the PAT – Workers' Food Program. This program involves enterpris-

es, workers and the government in an effort to ensure workers access to food at lower prices. Companies can deduct twice the amounts they spend for this purpose from their income tax, provided that this deduction does not exceed 4% of the income tax owed, and they can deduct up to 20% of the benefit from their workers' wages.

Currently, the PAT covers 8 million workers in about 80,000 companies. An additional 9 million receive some other kind of food aid. However, 24.8 million formal and informal workers (excluding civil and military servants) are not receiving any kind of food grant.

The PAT's weak performance can be attributed to the low fiscal incentives available. Currently, 93% of all Brazilian enterprises (which total more than 3 million) pay their income tax based on the assumed profit regime of the simple taxation system, which does not contemplate access to the fiscal benefits afforded by the PAT. This is a dilemma, as micro and small enterprises that use the simple taxation regime are precisely the ones that pay the lowest wages and face the greatest difficulties to access a subsidy to ensure better access to food to their staff.

However, many companies have the means to collaborate directly by improving the access of their employees to food autonomously, beyond the limits provided for in the law. Distributing basic food baskets to more needy employees can go a long way in reinforcing their family budget. The quantity and variety of the food items included in these baskets are very important and should be supervised by a nutritionist. Initiatives such as granting a higher amount in food stamps or offering snacks or breakfast to employees have an immediate effect on their well-being and also on their productivity.

### **DONATION OF BASIC FOOD BASKETS IN EMERGENCIES**

Another major form of collaboration is that of donating basic food baskets. This is a policy that is typically adopted in emergency situations. In the past, many experiences of donating basic food baskets on a permanent basis were used for purposes of clientelism and corruption. At the same time, these practices had the undesirable effect of making poor people accustomed to receiving food baskets and developing a passive attitude, reducing even more their opportunities to resume an active and productive life.

The continued distribution of food baskets also had a strong negative impact on trade in poor regions. Because these food baskets met much of the food needs of the families, trade in the “beneficiary” regions would come to a virtual halt, undermining local development possibilities even more. In 2001, the federal government cut the funds for distributing food baskets, after they reached a peak of R\$ 28.5 million in 1998.

For these reasons, donations of food baskets are only allowed under the Zero Hunger Project in emergency situations. The private initiative can play a helpful role in the execution of this policy not only by buying and distributing basic food baskets, but also in two very original ways, namely:

- a) In exchanging information and using existing electronic purchasing systems of large supermarket chains, commodities brokers and wholesalers. In these activities, highly specialized executives work with information on prices, quotations and availability of food items included in basic food baskets. The corporate sector can provide public authorities and charity institutions with important information for buying and assembling food baskets.
- b) In logistical support, making trucks and distribution centers of supermarkets and wholesalers available for this purpose. Companies operating in these areas have a solid framework that allows them to assist Brazilians facing difficulties in remote regions in Brazil at short notice. This support would make it possible to overcome the main hurdles to distributing food baskets through official channels, namely, the unavailability of government storehouses in many remote locations and the sluggishness of government to decide on and hire transportation services.

## **FIGHTING MOTHER-CHILD UNDERNUTRITION**

One of the main areas in which companies can invest in partnership with charity institutions is in fighting mother-child undernutrition. The infant mortality rate in Brazil, 32.7 per 1.000 live births in 2001, is still very high, although it dropped significantly from 46.2 per 1.000 live births in 1991. As a comparison, the rate in Mexico is 25 per 1.000 live births and in the USA it is 8 per 1.000 live births. In Brazil, undernutrition is the main cause of child mortality.

Companies can play a major role in this area to complement the actions of public authorities to monitor and advise families, mothers and children under one year. There are food supplementation alternatives available, but providing information on breastfeeding is paramount. For this purpose, companies should ensure the right of their female staff to breastfeed their children and respect their breastfeeding schedule.

Many NGOs and associations, besides the Children's Pastoral, are carrying out consistent activities in the area of food security for mothers and babies that can be directly supported by enterprises. Companies can often act as a bridge between those organizations and the communities where they operate.

### **DAY-CARE CENTERS AND MONITORING OF THE CHILD POPULATION**

Companies should keep day-care centers duly registered with the National Social Work Council (CNAS) and inspect the food supplementation provided by these facilities to the children of their employees. It is suggested that mothers should be given a basic food basket to feed their preschool-age children appropriately.

Companies can support the communities in which they operate by promoting mechanisms to monitor the health status of newborn or preschool-age children. The reduction observed in child mortality rates in Brazil in recent years can be largely attributed to the work of the Children's Pastoral. This work is based on monitoring the health status of children in the outskirts of large cities monthly and on controlling their nourishment.

Enterprises can engage in similar projects, making resources available to train volunteers, giving access to their medical or outpatient facilities to registered families or even holding nutrition reinforcement and immunization campaigns in the communities in which they operate.

### **FOOD CONSUMPTION EDUCATION**

Food consumption education in our country requires high investments and a true cultural change. Information is lacking on the nutritional qualities of food. This situation leads consumers to

buy food without taking into account its quality or even its price, based only on its advertising.

Brazilian TV has a huge influence on the low-income population and an advertising campaign can, for example, lead a family to replace healthy food with junk food. But successful steps have been taken to regulate this influence. Brazil adopted strict laws setting out limits on advertising of milk and milk by-products. However, laws in some other countries are even more restrictive and include direct recommendations for what families should consume. In countries such as Italy, for example, a “quarantine” is imposed on popular children’s TV artists to prevent them from using their image to advertise food products. The objective is to ensure a healthy diet from childhood to all the population.

Nowadays, even in relatively poor countries, obesity and undernutrition go hand in hand for lack of information and also because the media encourages people to consume non-healthy food. Food wastage is a huge paradox caused by food consumerism, which is brought about by the overexposure of the population to advertising. There are many countries where large numbers of people face food shortage while food is wasted – whether in its production, distribution or cooking.

### **Box 2 – Initiatives that companies can adopt**

Enterprises can contribute to food security in many ways and in different spheres of action, as suggested by some ideas that have been put in practice already:

In the company itself

- Providing information to its staff in the company’s cafeteria on the nutritional value of food and on items to be included in a balanced diet, besides advising them on what food products they should buy and on how to cook them at home.
- Ensuring the same type of advice, through lectures and internal newsletters, to staff that receive food stamps.
- Hiring a nutritionist to go to restaurants nearby where employees of the company have their meals to provide advice, set up a basic menu and prepare healthier dishes at a lower cost.

In the community

- Reinforcing educational activities, producing informative materials, and promoting courses and campaigns.

- Widely disseminating information through local newspapers and community radio programs on the price and quality of the food items bought by the company's cafeteria.
  - Promoting, monthly, a "food weekend" for the community featuring cooking lessons and tips on how to make full use of food items.
- In society
- Fulfilling their obligation to provide precise and correct information on food sold in the market, which is particularly applicable to food and distribution companies (food manufacturers, wholesalers, supermarkets, caterers, fast-food restaurants, etc.).
  - Acting with social responsibility, creating food information and quality control systems and, mainly, taking measures to reduce food wastage. Most food that is wasted ends up affecting the sector's cost composition, increasing the price of the end product.

### **SUPPORT TO EXPANDING THE SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM**

Companies can also contribute to expanding the School Meal Program – the largest meal program in Brazil. This program was launched in 1954 and covered almost 40 million children and adolescents a day in 2009. In 1994, the support provided to the procurement and preparation of meals was decentralized, and local communities, through their city halls, are now in charge of managing the funds transferred by the federal government for this purpose.

Up to the end of 2001, the federal government transferred a daily amount of R\$ 0.13 per child enrolled in public primary and lower secondary schools and R\$ 0.06 a day for students in children's education and in philanthropic institutions. These amounts ensured the provision of 350 kcal and 9 g of protein per meal, meeting 15% of the daily nutritional needs of these children. Spending with staff, logistics and facilities are borne by state governments or city halls. These amounts have now been raised to R\$ 0.30 for students enrolled in basic education schools (pre-schools and primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools for young people and adults).

Obviously, meeting only part of the nutritional needs of school-age children is also very insufficient. However, government

fund transfers are virtually the only resource available to feed children in many municipalities. On the other hand, these funds are complemented by the community and managed by PTAs – Parents' and Teachers Associations – in many municipalities.

Cooperating with PTAs, companies provide substantial support to feeding children. After the School Meal Program was decentralized, managing systems are being implemented where the communities themselves control the resources, hire staff and define the food items to be included in the meals.

## LOCAL POLICIES AGAINST HUNGER

Regionalization and the management of cultural differences are strengths of the Zero Hunger Project. Solutions must be adapted to each target audience. Problems are different in rural and urban areas, and there are also major differences between villages, small and medium-sized cities and metropolitan regions.

The participation of enterprises in supporting different regions should be duly analyzed. Although it is obvious that companies should act in the geographical areas in which they carry out their business, supporting projects against hunger in regions or locations facing greater gaps is a sound attitude. It is also very important to support areas that are not always in the immediate radius of action of companies but are indirectly linked to them.

Local policies will be presented below divided into actions in rural areas, in small and medium-sized cities, and in metropolitan regions.

### FIGHTING HUNGER IN RURAL AREAS

Many Brazilians in rural areas are vulnerable to hunger. Companies can reinforce improvements in the income and food conditions of these populations in two immediate ways: supporting family-based agricultural/livestock and non-agricultural/livestock trading activities (a combination known as pluriactivity) and production for self-consumption.

This support can be provided through technical assistance, donations of inputs, construction of cisterns for home water supply and household production schemes and through other means.

The federal government has made major progress in this area by launching the Pronaf – National Family Agriculture Program, which provides credit at low, prefixed interest rates. However, this program could advance more, with more resources, much less red tape and even lower costs.

Currently, besides official banks and farmers' cooperatives, private corporations are also granting credit to farmers. However, this credit has always been linked to advance money which tie farmers to its providers or operators. New credit channels should be created focused on agricultural and non-agricultural activities such as housing, construction of wells and cisterns, investments in small hotels and restaurants, etc.

The public sector lacks the flexibility and agility of the private sector, and this is why companies can act directly in this area, as many NGOs are doing already. Companies can also support the development of local certified agriculture/livestock or handicraft programs. It is a matter of valuing small-scale production arrangements, highlighting the geographic and cultural differences of the supplying regions. Considering that diversity is increasingly valued, particularly by high-income consumers, it is a matter of investing in the trade of differentiated goods, particularly of local products, ensuring a higher income to small farmers.

### **FIGHTING HUNGER IN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED CITIES**

Almost half of all Brazilians with an income of less than US\$ 1.08 (the poverty line adopted by the Zero Hunger Project<sup>3</sup>) live in small and medium-sized cities. Paradoxically, it could be very effective to fight poverty and hunger in these areas, where it is much easier to identify poor families, support them with grants and monitor their use.

Companies could act directly in small and medium-sized cities by creating and maintaining food banks. This is a program designed to ensure the use of food items that otherwise would be wasted. It was inspired by the Food Bank program of Second Harvest, an NGO

3. This figure was calculated according to the poverty line adopted by the World Bank, which is based on a per capita family income of US\$ 1.00/day in terms of purchasing power parity with imputation of self-consumption in rural areas and deducting expenses with rent and real estate instalment payments.

with about 200 food banks that supplies food to 26 million Americans and Puerto Ricans, 8 million of whom are children.

There are some variations between the different food banks in operation in Brazil. However, they are usually equipped with teams of trained professionals and vehicles adapted to transport food products. Each team has a predefined route to collect food items donated by participating companies, which are then distributed to registered institutions on the same day.

The Urban Harvest Program was also based on experiences under way such as that of Foodchain, an American NGO network that collects, every day and safely, fresh food items and ready meals that were not touched in restaurants, hotels, buffets and snack bars.

Companies can be instrumental in three ways basically:

- donating food items, lending vehicles to transport them, making storehouses and packaging materials available, etc.;
- collaborating with institutions that assist the target audience of the program, as food banks in general only complement their diet;
- making voluntary technical experts available, such as nutritionists, microbiologists, accountants and also workers such as drivers, deliverers and assistants.

### Box 3 – The Good Samaritan Charter

The idea of the Charter was based on other fiscal incentive laws in Brazil, such as the PAT and culture incentive laws, and on US laws. It resulted in four draft bills and a preliminary agreement project involving the ICMS (Brazil's turnover tax) the purpose of which was protecting donors and providing tax exemptions and incentives. Three of these proposals, the ones that involve tax exemptions and incentives, were prepared by the Executive Branch. The one that deals with civil and criminal responsibility of natural and legal persons who donate food was prepared by the Legislative Branch. The proposed agreement involving the ICMS will be discussed and decided upon by the National Finance Policy Council (Confaz). Entrepreneurs would also be exempted from the Tax on Industrialized Products (IPI) for food, machines, equipment and utensils donated to non-profit organizations, associations and foundations for preparing and distributing food free-of-charge to poor people.

Of these draft bills, only the one that provides for civil and criminal responsibility of donors was approved by the Senate of the Republic (Bill n. 4,747/1998) and is currently under analysis at the Chamber of Representatives. However, a similar bill (n. 3,289/1997) is also being analyzed by the Chamber of Representatives and is now pending an opinion from the Constitution and Justice Committee. The rest of them are being discussed at the two houses of the National Congress.

## NEW LAWS TO STIMULATE DONATIONS

The experience of the Mesa São Paulo program (see chart) led the São Paulo branch of Sesc (Social Service of Commerce) to propose amendments in the law in force. Today, companies resist very much the idea of donating food for fear of the responsibility that can be imputed to them for any damages caused by donated food. There is also the problem of the IPI and ICMS that is charged on donated food, which can turn a charitable activity into a burden for donors. Therefore, the Trade Federation of the State of São Paulo proposed, in 1996, that the Federal Executive Branch should draw up specific laws to encourage donations: the set of bills known as the Good Samaritan Charter.

### Box 4 – The Mesa São Paulo Program

Distributing food, mainly in natura food items, to fight hunger and food wastage is the mission of the Mesa São Paulo Program. For this purpose, it collects food from donor companies and distributes it to registered institutions. The original project, implemented in the Sesc branch of Carmo in 1994, relies on nutritionists and social workers who check the quality of the food that is distributed and its use in the beneficiary institutions.

The professionals of these institutions are trained on how to store, clean and handle food to ensure more nutritional meals. A careful planning ensures that the food is collected from companies and distributed to the beneficiary institutions on the same day.

The Mesa São Paulo program has gone through different phases. Initially, it distributed ready meals, but it decided not to do this anymore for different reasons, including potential contamination risks during storage and transportation.

Currently, it distributes mainly vegetables, legumes and fruits and has 200 donor companies. Many of them are small farmers, several are bakeries and some are large companies. Most companies donate food, but there are also cases such as that of DHL, which participates in the project in a specific way. The company donated a vehicle to distribute the food and its driver, hired by DHL, remains at the disposal of Mesa São Paulo, with two other volunteers from the company.

The Mesa São Paulo Program assists 194 institutions, including day-care centers, shelter homes, homeless shelters, associations that support children with cancer and other organizations, and has become a benchmark for similar initiatives in other Sesc branches, such as the ones of Itaquera (São Paulo), Santos, São José dos Campos and Bauru, as well as in all the states of the Federation. Currently, these food banks are linked to a network known as Mesa Brazil, which has a centralized management system.

In 2010, Sesc celebrated the establishment of 74 units and over 174 million complemented meals since the program was launched in São Paulo.

## PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN RETAILERS AND GOVERNMENT

Another important local development policy is a partnership between government and retailers based on a new relationship model involving different governmental spheres and supermarkets and other establishments where food is sold. The expansion of supermarkets and self-service facilities is an undeniable fact. Large supermarket chains are already operating even in small communities. They can influence the buying habits of consumers and control prices.

Both individual supermarkets or supermarket chains and city halls have a lot to gain from these partnerships. Their joint work builds credibility and good reputation for distribution companies, ensuring a constant flow of customers and higher sales. Supermarkets can provide support on three major fronts, namely:

- In the marketing of local family farming products, by allowing them to be displayed, tasted and sold in specific areas within their premises. A supermarket can be granted a deduction in municipal taxes, provided that it sets apart an area of a certain size within its premises for this purpose.

- In keeping profit margins and prices consistent with the purchasing power of the communities. Surveys show that, in different situations, large supermarket chains kept prices at a higher level than local chains or small individual establishments. It is therefore recommended that a public commitment is made to keep profit margins at a certain level, and a committee of consumers and technical experts of the city hall could also be set up to assess and control prices.
- In participating with suppliers, farmers and local agribusiness in local food campaigns, or in marketing seasonal products or meeting specific demands of the community.

### URBAN FARMERS AND FOOD PRODUCERS

Urban agriculture also deserves special mention in the set of policies designed to secure corporate support to the fight against hunger. The attention usually given to rural agriculture prevents food production and distribution in urban areas from receiving a level of attention that is commensurate with their importance.

A program should be implemented for strengthening small and medium-sized urban food producers (and producers of ready meals) and, mainly, for qualifying small retailers.

Connecting agro-food supply and production also reflects a strategy of “bringing the two ends together,” namely, farmers and consumers. Managers of public programs have recognized the role of trade intermediation in ensuring both a regular purchase of food from farmers and its supply to consumers. Obviously, the way that such intermediation plays this role depends on the availability of regulatory tools to prevent trade interests from harming those of farmers. Urban agriculture has grown so much in importance that the FAO launched a program recently, called Cities feeding Cities, with a focus on establishing vegetable gardens in urban areas, on using vacant lots in cities for growing food and, mainly, on promoting appropriate water use in urban environments.

Companies can launch and decisively support projects of this kind by making plots available (using legal mechanisms such as loan for use, for example) for unemployed workers to grow food, providing materials, inputs and technical assistance to these new farmers, and buying the products they grow. Once supply is available, it is only

logic to say that supermarkets, open-air markets and official institutions will also use this local production to ensure their own supply.

## FIGHTING HUNGER IN METROPOLITAN REGIONS

The Zero Hunger Project proposes a set of actions intended to fight hunger in metropolitan regions, since it is in these areas that poverty and hunger have been growing more. Private companies can collaborate in these policies, since it is precisely in these areas that companies are more concentrated and are more directly active due to the markets available in them.

### *Subsidized restaurants for the low-income population*

The idea of setting up subsidized restaurants is particularly suited for large metropolises. A large number of people go to the downtown area of large cities every day. These people work, attend school or use services and often spend the whole day in downtown areas without having a single meal. The possibility of having meals at a low cost is extremely important to these people. The Zero Hunger Program takes into account the need implement a comprehensive program of subsidized restaurants that can serve meals at cost price and meet the huge demand for food of low-income workers who are not eating appropriately.

The lunch available in subsidized restaurants already in operation is often the only meal these individuals have during the day. Surveys show that a meal in subsidized restaurants could cost R\$ 1.80, considering all variable and labor costs (as observed in the one available in Belo Horizonte). This is also the average observed in the state of Rio de Janeiro. This figure does not include expenses with the physical facilities of the restaurants, rent or renovation costs or other such expenses, which can be borne by the government. If spending with staff and infrastructure maintenance is borne by city halls, state governments or charities, as is the case today, the cost of a meal could come down to close to R\$ 1.00.

The private initiative can engage in a program of subsidized restaurants by taking part in the administration and operational management of new facilities. Except for the restaurant in Belo Horizonte, the management of all subsidized restaurants is outsourced. The proliferation of subsidized restaurants throughout

Brazil shows that, apart from the social aspects involved in this activity, it is a profitable business. From a strategic point of view, subsidized restaurants usually don't compete with other food-related businesses, although bars and restaurants near these new facilities were forced to lower their prices in some cities.

But it is not only by managing subsidized restaurants and making them operational that companies can be instrumental. They can take many other actions, such as providing snacks and meals to their workers in metropolises at cost price, entering into agreements to donate food, or even subsidizing the costs of these restaurants with funds raised through advertisements in them.

The donation of perishable food items that otherwise would be thrown away to charity institutions and low-income groups involves proposals for collecting the food items and distributing them. The application of new laws should lead to a significant increase in food placed at the disposal of organizations to meet the nutritional needs of the low-income population. However, regardless of these laws, through means such as documents assigning responsibilities and agreements, companies can collaborate with donations of food items or cash.

### *Food Banks*

The application of the new laws also makes it easier to set up food banks, allowing for a continuous flow of products to supply subsidized restaurants, shelters for the homeless, referral centers for destitute individuals and even the school meal program. Charity institutions or the food bank could collect the donated food items, separate them, maybe even process them to some extent and distribute them through supporting facilities.

The donated food products would be mainly distributed through charity institutions with the support from public authorities. These partnerships would be aimed at removing indigents from the streets and providing them with shelter, meals and training to prepare them to look for new work possibilities.

### *Central food purchasing and distributing facilities*

The operation of facilities such as smaller grocery outlets of different kinds, itinerant grocery stores and community purchasing schemes should be reconsidered as an alternative for a food secu-

rity policy in urban areas. To make such a scheme feasible, it is also necessary to stimulate the establishment of central food purchasing and distributing facilities in the outskirts of metropolitan regions. These central facilities would provide logistical and marketing support to the operation of concessionaires and small retailers, who in turn could market food items included in the basic food basket and other food products at cheaper prices.

Nowadays, the central purchasing facilities of large supermarket chains allow for significant gains in terms of costs. Moreover, owing to their operational features, they can promote better-quality products and a closer relationship (in terms of grown varieties, packaging, marketing mechanisms, etc.) with farmers and suppliers.

Another way to consolidate partnerships with retailers is by supporting the so-called *Ceasas* (central food supply facilities) and public food purchasing and distributing facilities in their operations with owners of small grocery stores. Public authorities would organize and facilitate the integration of active retailers in cooperatives or associations for them to be able to compete on an equal footing with large supermarket chains. These owners of small grocery stores would be trained to do a better job and offer better and more affordable products to populations in poorer areas.

## SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES OF FIGHTING HUNGER

Some interesting examples of companies that were engaged in actions against hunger even before the Zero Hunger Project was launched will be provided below. These are Brazilian enterprises with a strong regional or national presence that are active in different sectors such as retail, heavy industry, transportation or IT. These are very inspiring examples, since they refer to companies that are not always active in the food area and have developed unique ways to take part in actions to mobilize civil society.

### CASA VERDE MÓVEIS

Casa Verde Móveis, a furniture company headquartered in Mirassol, in the interior of the state of São Paulo, was ranked second in a list of the best 100 companies to work in by the *Guia Exame* magazine. With a staff of a little over 200 people, the company

keeps a relationship based on dialogue and respect with them and develops programs focused on improving their quality of life.

One of the main actions that Casa Verde has been implementing since January 2002 is a microcredit program called *Programa de Empréstimo Patrimonial*. Through it, its employees have access to credit up to three times their wages to buy, pay off or renovate their homes that can be paid back in 24 installments. Fully financed by Casa Verde, this program had granted 65 loans up to 2002.

Launched in 2001, the *Mais Conhecimento* (more knowledge) Program ensures an ongoing training arrangement in the workplace for the company's workers. The company has granted 22 scholarships for training courses, TV-based courses with material included, English courses and refresher courses abroad. In addition, it provides a financial aid for its employees to buy school materials for their children.

Casa Verde Móveis also implements actions to assist its immediate community. Through the project *Apoio ao Lar dos Velhinhos* (support to a shelter for the elderly), it provides meals to 34 elderly people in Mirassol every day. The elderly people receive weekly visits of nurses of the company, of voluntary employees, and of an occupational therapist. Casa Verde supplies all the material and holds a Christmas eve celebration in the shelter; it also contributes financially to Apae – Association of Parents and Friends of People with Disabilities – in Mirassol monthly and to two day-care centers in the city for children of its workers, benefiting about 400 children. Based on suggestions from its employees, the company delivers two food baskets to poor families every month.

### **CPTM – COMPANHIA PAULISTA DE TRENS METROPOLITANOS**

Companhia Paulista de Trens Metropolitanos is a public enterprise that operates in the urban transportation industry in the state of São Paulo. Among many other programs of the company designed for communities, the following ones stand out:

*Bom Lanche* (good snack) program: in May 2002, CPTM set up ten of the program kiosks in the main train stations in São Paulo where users can have a highly nutritional morning snack at cost price (R\$ 0.40). The objective of this action is to reduce the occur-

rence of sudden illness in passengers for lack of food. Since it was implemented, over 1.5 million snacks consisting of a sandwich with cold cuts and a fruit juice have been consumed. The program created 70 new direct jobs. Every day, 14,000 snacks are sold in the kiosks set up in the Brás, Barra Funda, Guaianazes, Francisco Morato, Santo André, Mauá, Osasco, Carapicuíba, Itapevi and Lapa train stations. The partners of CPTM in the program are the state secretariats of Metropolitan Transportation and of Agriculture and Supply, besides the company Terra Azul Alimentação Coletiva e Serviços Ltda.

*Menor Aprendiz* (young apprentice) program: under this program, industrial learning courses focused on basic railway notions are delivered in partnership with Senac. About 1,800 students have already graduated as technicians in railway transportation by CPTM since the program was implemented.

*Qualidade de Vida* (quality of life) project: the project holds monthly campaigns on health education, drug use prevention, family planning, accident prevention, among others.

### **CST – COMPANHIA SIDERÚRGICA DE TUBARÃO**

The company Companhia Siderúrgica de Tubarão, headquartered in Vitória (capital city of the state of Espírito Santo), has been investing US\$ 1 million a year in programs for the community mainly in the areas of education, health care, environment, urban development and culture. It has been implementing a specific action against hunger, besides various projects aimed at generating income and jobs.

*Solidariedade* (solidarity) program: CST has been developing this program since 1993 by making available its central kitchen, ingredients and all the necessary resources for preparing a nutritious soup that is served daily to poor people of the community. The soup is prepared by 40 volunteers, including employees of the company, relatives of theirs and representatives of local NGOs. The companies that provide transportation services to CST collaborate by distributing the soup to different institutions in the Greater Vitória area. The program has already assisted 26 organizations in the metropolitan region, totaling 3,200 people.

*Aica – Atendimento Integrado à Criança e ao Adolescente* (integrated care for children and adolescents) program: this program

assists children and adolescents at social and personal risk living in areas surrounding the premises of CST, encouraging them to attend school and to take part in the community life. It offers sewing and bakery workshops, besides psychological and dental care, tours and complementary activities when they are not at school. In 2001 alone, over 1,000 children were assisted by this project.

The CST company develops other programs designed to bring more children to school and to ensure poor young people in the community access to the labor market by offering professionalizing courses and workshops. Examples include the *Crer com as Mãos* (believe with your hands) project, the *Oficinas de Iniciação Profissional* (professional initiation workshops) project, and the *Casa do Menino* (boy's home) project. A project called *Universidade para Todos* (university for all) has also been implemented to ensure more democratic access to universities to students graduating from public schools.

### MRN – MINERAÇÃO RIO DO NORTE

The company Mineração Rio do Norte, linked to the Vale do Rio Doce company, invests in different social responsibility programs for its staff and their families and communities located near its headquarters in the Trombetas port (state of Pará), located at 1,000 kilometers from the city of Belém. Since 1997, the MRN company has been sponsoring a gymkhana for students based on topics such as ethics and citizenship rights. In 2001, students collected food, clothes, books, medicines and toys that were distributed to 460 families.

The Municipal School of Boa Vista, built by MRN in 1991, offers children's education and primary education from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade and is maintained in partnership with the city hall of Oriximiná. 166 of its students are from the Boa Vista Community, a *Quilombo* community. The company makes resources available for teachers' training, transportation, housing, food and medical assistance and takes care of maintaining the school building and of providing two meals a day to its students.

Students at the appropriate age can enroll in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade of the Porto Trombetas School or in a school for young people and adults, both of which are funded by the MRN company. The Jonathas Pontes Athias School offers lower secondary education from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup>

grade and upper secondary education to 1,119 sons and daughters of employees of the mining company and of people living in riverine communities. Annually, MRN spends about US\$ 1 million to maintain the school, bearing all its costs to provide transportation, uniforms and part of its educational materials. Currently, 45 students of the Boa Vista community are attending the school at the Trombetas port.

AMI – *Ação Monitorada de Integração* (monitored integration action) project: this is a project aimed at reducing the high school repetition and drop-out rates observed in the Boa Vista community. It offers IT and reinforcement classes on a full-time basis, apart from lunch and dental care. Of the 33 students of the 2001 class, 16 of whom were from riverine communities, only 6 flunked the final exam.

*Quilombo* project: in partnership with the Esperança (hope) Foundation of Santarém, the MRN company sends every month a boat with equipment, doctors and nurses to two *Quilombo* communities located on the banks of the Trombetas river to provide medical assistance to about 300 families.

### NESTLÉ – *NUTRIR* (NOURISH) PROGRAM

At the end of 1999, the company Nestlé launched a food education program to prevent child undernutrition. The *Nutrir* Program provides information and advice to children of poor communities and their families on how to have the best nutrition possible, even with scant resources. It basically consists in meetings between duly trained volunteers and children and adolescents aged between 5 and 14 years old and their mothers called *Folia Culinária* (culinary revelry). Using games and play, discussions are held with the children on topics related to food, hygiene and the nutritional value of different food items, while their mothers prepare a meal that is later served to the participants, also under the supervision of volunteers.

The success of the program led to the realization that it can be applied in any city. As a result, a training program began to be delivered by the main coordinators of the *Nutrir* Program together with hired consultants that will make it possible to establish a national undernutrition prevention network. Intensified in 2002, the *Nutrir* Program had trained 335 people up till 2001, including cooks, mothers, community agents and educators who provide services to 176 recognized institutions, benefiting over 70,000 young people.

The units make spaces available in their facilities for volunteers to hold meetings and plan their activities. Nestlé encourages its staff to take part in the project directly as volunteers and also to contribute donations in cash to it. For each donation that is made, the company contributes the same amount. The funds raised in this fashion are used to buy pedagogic materials, to prepare manuals and to cover expenses with transportation and meals.

The program also supports initiatives of mothers and other community members that, apart from improving the quality of meals served at home, can generate income with the knowledge acquired.

### **NOVADATA COMPUTADORES**

The company Novadata Computadores, headquartered in Brasília, developed a project in partnership with the NGO Ágora – Association for Projects Against Hunger – with the aim of combining food reinforcement with job generation. Novadata donates resources through Ágora to the *Cestas da Cidadania* (citizenship food baskets) project, which delivers food baskets to poor families selected in its area by the community itself. An organization set up by the community itself buys the food items used in these baskets, besides checking prices and preparing and distributing them. Families pay for the food baskets in full, half in cash and half in community work; participation in training courses is considered work. This money stays in the community and is channeled to the Revolving Fund for Solidarity-Based Loans.

The fund provides microcredit and technical assistance to potential community undertakings that can generate jobs and income. To receive the benefit of the food baskets, besides satisfying certain social criteria, the families must take on some commitments with their community to avoid assistential practices while stimulating their self-esteem and bonds with the community.

The project was launched in 1993 in the Garbage Dump of the Estrutural road in Brasília (Federal District). Since then, it was implemented in other sites in the Federal District and Feira de Santana, in the state of Bahia. It is currently being implemented in a rural area of the Federal District, in the Sítio Novo and Sarandi communities, covering 60 families. Up till now, the main results achieved are the

following ones: 300 tons of food products have been distributed; 2,000 children are being evaluated periodically; over 500 micro-undertakings have been financed; hundreds of meetings, lectures and community activities have been carried out.

In 1994, Consea – National Food Security Council, an agency of the Presidency of the Republic, recommended that this project should be used as an example of a public policy against hunger.

### TUPY FUNDIÇÕES

The company Tupy Fundições, headquartered in Joinville (state of Santa Catarina), entered into a social contract intended to educate, raise the awareness of and stimulate communities to seek knowledge where the company is operational. The company has been developing several actions, among which the following ones deserve special mention:

*Mutirão da Alfabetização* (self-help literacy action): with the aim of contributing to eradicate illiteracy in Joinville, the Tupy company entered into a partnership with Alfalit in 1998. The project has delivered literacy courses to over 3,000 people already, reducing the illiteracy rate in the city.

*Cidadão do Amanhã* (citizen of the future) project: launched in 1999, this project supports two day-care centers in Joinville. The company provides meals, transportation, educational materials and school reinforcement courses and invests in improving physical and cultural facilities.

*Industry-Community Integration Program (PIIC)*: launched in 2002, this program sponsors professionalizing courses according to needs identified in community associations. In 2002, the Tupy company trained about 400 people as car mechanics, electricians, bicycle mechanics, welders, telephone operators and secretaries.

*Continuous Development Program*: this is a program that has been operational for over 10 years with the aim of developing and improving the schooling level of employees of Tupy Fundições. The Tupy Corporate University delivers professional improvement courses and makes it possible for the company's employees to move up in schooling. Last year, 1,381 people, including employees and their

dependents, attended fast-track primary and secondary education courses offered by the company. In addition, specialization courses and master's degree programs are offered in related areas. As a result, 92 % of the program participants were promoted in their jobs and the schooling of the company's staff has improved significantly.

### **BANCO DO BRASIL**

Banco do Brasil has been implementing a program called *Adolescent Worker Program* to support the personal and professional training of adolescents from families with a per capita income of up to half a minimum wage. The adolescents, who are hired as apprentices, must be attending at least the 7th grade of lower secondary education or a fast-track elementary education course and be registered in social assistance programs. Up to the end of 2002, 2,800 adolescents had been hired. The apprentices stay in the bank for 18-24 months and leave when they reach the age of 17 years and ten months.

### **BANDEIRANTE DE ENERGIA**

Bandeirante de Energia, an electricity distribution company that covers 28 municipalities in the state São Paulo, developed a campaign adding the appeal of saving electricity to that of fighting hunger by stimulating selective garbage collection schemes among its clients. Under the program, garbage and waste are processed and sold as scrap. The funds thus raised are used to buy food that is donated charity institutions. Another campaign launched by the company offered a set of three energy-saving light bulbs to each person who donated 1 kg of food.

### **COMPANHIA INDUSTRIAL CATAGUASES**

Through the project *Tecendo Solidaridade* (weaving solidarity), the Cataguases company, a yarn and fabric manufacturer, encourages voluntary donations by its staff. Every month, contributions in cash are deducted from the payroll and food donations are sent to charity institutions in the region of Cataguases (state of Minas Gerais). Its employees manage the funds raised and render accounts to the community themselves.

## GRUPO ZEMA

Created in 1999, the *Esperança* (hope) project made it possible to structure the support of the Zema Group and of its staff and partners to institutions that assist poor children in municipalities in the state of Minas Gerais in which the group's companies operate. The company channels all the revenue from the sale of reusable materials such as paper, cardboard, PET bottles, plastic materials and aluminium cans, amounting to R\$ 2,500.00 a month in average, to selected organizations. The Zema Group bears all the expenses with staff and with the handling, collection, transportation and pressing of the materials.

## IQF – SCHERING-PLOUGH

Through the *Criança é Vida* (Child is Life) Institute, which is kept by the company, courses and trainings are delivered to mothers and children in health care, hygiene and food. The chemical company IQF – Schering-Plough, headquartered in São Paulo, also supports the care provided to children in day-care centers and hospitals, besides encouraging its staff to engage in voluntary programs. After entering into dozens of partnerships, the company began to train its staff and volunteers to multiply the work in basic health education, which has already covered 17,300 families.

## JOHNSON & JOHNSON PRODUTOS PROFISSIONAIS

The companies of the Johnson & Johnson group, which have been operating in Brazil since 1933, have developed the tradition of encouraging their employees to take part in initiatives aimed at assisting the communities in which they live. The company Johnson & Johnson Produtos Profissionais keeps a regular food donation program for over 40 charities in the region of the Paraíba river valley (state of São Paulo). For each kilo of food that is voluntarily donated by its employees, the company makes a food donation in the amount of R\$ 0.75.

## MOTOS MATOGROSSO

Besides a literacy program and one to donate motorcycles to charities, the company Motos Matogrosso (a motorcycle dealer)

keeps the *Cometa Frutificar* (fructification comet) program to distribute seedlings of fruit trees to be planted in the backyards of homes of low-income families in Cáceres (state of Mato Grosso). It also delivers courses to students and community members to teach them how to grow tree fruits and work with fruits, making them aware of their nutritional value and of their importance to good health.

### **RLM COMÉRCIO DE ALIMENTOS**

The RLM company, which manages five McDonald's outlets in Santos and Praia Grande, has been developing, in partnership with the Mãos Dadas Community Association (ACMD), a project to support the Children's Pastoral in actions against child undernutrition and mortality. The company also holds food collection and multimix campaigns and distributes the collected food to poor communities located in the Baixada Santista area, where the project partners are active. The Children's Pastoral assists over 8,000 children through this project.

### **SHELL BRASIL**

Every year, the company Shell Brasil holds a campaign called *Christmas without Hunger* among its employees. During the month of December, non-perishable food items are collected to be donated in food baskets distributed to low-income families. In 2001, besides bearing the costs to collect and distribute the food items, for each kilo donated by its employees Shell Brasil contributed two kilos, totaling over 12 tons of food products collected in the cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo alone.

### **SKILL**

Skill, an accounting and audit company, develops a social project called *Skill Fazendo Acontecer* (Skill making it happen), which distributes food baskets in slums and supports various organizations that assist poor children in Greater São Paulo. Skill also has a project called *Água no Nordeste* (water in the northeast) in the municipalities of Tabira (state of Pernambuco) and Lagoinha (state of Paraíba), which are "godfathered" by the company. Skill built artesian wells and health care stations in these municipalities,

apart from developing educational programs and stimulating the establishment of community vegetable gardens in them.

### **TEN YAD (SÃO PAULO-STATE OF SÃO PAULO)**

The Israelite charity Ten Yad carries out permanent actions against hunger, such as manufacturing canned soup, distributing food kits and keeping a community refectory where meals are served to low-income people in the downtown area of São Paulo. The support from a set of companies is fundamental for these activities to be maintained. Companies contribute in different ways: they adopt an employee, paying his or her wages; they make donations in cash, materials and services; and they enter into agreements for donating and transporting food products.

### **TIM MAXITEL (STATE OF MINAS GERAIS)**

TIM Maxitel, a group of telephone companies, implemented the *PÃO – Programa de Alimentação Orientada* (BREAD - guided food program) in 40 municipalities located in the Jequitinhonha and Murici valleys in the state of Minas Gerais, benefiting about 12,000 people in one of Brazil's poorest regions. The program encourages the use of resources available in the communities by disseminating information on food multimix and alternative food to community leaders and cooks of schools, day-care centers and charities.

### **YÁZIGI**

Yázigi Internexus, a language school network, promotes various actions with a focus on poor children and adolescents. In the communities where it is active, it grants scholarships, encourages voluntary work, and makes donations to charity campaigns and organizations. Since 1999, the company has been training voluntary teachers to teach English to poor children free of charge in neighborhoods of the Greater São Paulo area. The schools that make up the network also support the professional development of young people from low-income families by offering them internships and hiring them.

## 6. THE ZERO HUNGER PROGRAM: MAIN LESSONS<sup>1</sup>

*FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean*

### INTRODUCTION

The launching of the Zero Hunger (*Fome Zero*) Program by the Federal Government in January 2003 made the Brazilian population aware of the paradox of millions of families not having enough food in a country where food abounds and which is experiencing a boom in the export of agricultural products. The commitment of the newly-elected president to eradicate hunger touched the Brazilian population at large and secured its support on a massive scale.

In December 2002, just before the new administration was sworn in, the then president-elect Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva requested the support from the director-general of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to set up a team of technical experts of FAO, of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and of the World Bank to work with a national team in revising the design and components of the Zero Hunger Project. This was an exciting exercise for all those involved and generated widespread support to the program's objectives and contents, but it also raised concerns in relation to the main challenges – particularly those of institutional nature – to be faced during its implementation. Report 1<sup>2</sup> of the team, however, underscored that “One of the main problems to be faced by the new Government is that of conciliating the huge expectations of the Brazilian people for large-scale, immediate results with the need to ensure quality, avoiding the continuity of a culture of dependence and minimizing undesired side effects.”

President Lula's determination to put an end to hunger in Brazil during his term, as reflected in the goals of the Zero Hunger

1. FAO working paper presented in a videoconference between Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Peru and Venezuela held on August 14, 2006.

2. FAO, IDB, WB, December 2002.

Program (FZ), aroused considerable interest in the international community. This interest was greater in developing countries, which are making an effort to achieve the objective of the World Food Summit of reducing the number of malnourished people in the world by half by 2015, which later on one became the first Millennium Development Goal. This international interest was reinforced by initiatives taken by president Lula jointly with the heads of State of France, Chile and Spain, during the Meeting of World Leaders for Action Against Hunger and Poverty, which was held at the UN headquarters in New York in September of 2004 and was attended by representatives of over 100 governments. In connection with this global proposal, the presidents of Brazil and Guatemala launched, in October 2005, a commitment to eradicate hunger in Latin America and in the Caribbean once and for all by the year 2025, which later on was endorsed by the 29 countries of the region that attended the FAO Regional Conference held in Caracas in April 2006.

Through the Special Food Security Program, the FAO has been working with over 100 developing countries to achieve the goal of the World Food Summit. Many of these countries, inspired, in part, by the leadership of president Lula, are preparing and implementing national food security programs to achieve that goal. They are extremely interested in learning with the Brazilian experience and in expanding it relying on the Brazilian technical cooperation.

This interest is particularly strong in Latin America and the Caribbean. For this reason, a videoconference was scheduled under the auspices of the FAO Regional Office on August 14, 2006, connecting leaders of the national food security programs of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Peru and Venezuela.

This brief revision of the Zero Hunger Program was prepared to be used as reference during the videoconference by an FAO team charged with following up on the implementation of program since its outset<sup>3</sup>. It consists in a summary of various documents that describe the evolution of the program and contain an evaluation of the performance and impact of its main components. In drafting the document, the team also used interviews that were held with different people involved in the program who are concerned with eradicating hunger and poverty in Brazil.

3. Benjamin Davis, Andrew MacMillan, Alberta Mascaretti and Fernando Soto Baquero.

Although it was specifically prepared for this videoconference, this document will be made available on the FAO websites (< [www.rlc.fao.org](http://www.rlc.fao.org) >) to all interested institutions involved in food security programs in other countries.

An expanded version of the document will be prepared by this team after the elections to be used as reference for discussions with new authorities and provide information on how the FAO can contribute to food security-related programs in the future.

## *FOME ZERO*

The Zero Hunger Program is a concept in evolution. In 2003, it was described as

a program created to fight hunger and its structural causes, which lead to social exclusion. In other words, the Zero Hunger Program was created to ensure food security to all Brazilian men and women. Food security involves more than putting an end to hunger today. It means making sure that all families can feed themselves regularly and with dignity in the necessary quantity and quality to ensure their physical and mental health. This program combines a set of public policies that involve the three levels of government: the federal, state and municipal levels. At the Federal Government level, it involves all Ministries<sup>4</sup>.

More recently, in 2005, the Zero Hunger Program was described as follows:

The Zero Hunger Program is a strategy of the Federal Government to ensure the human right to adequate food, giving priority to people facing difficulties to access food. This initiative is an element of its efforts to promote food and nutrition security and contribute to eradicating extreme poverty and ensuring citizenship rights to population segments that are more vulnerable to hunger<sup>5</sup>.

In practical terms, the *Fome Zero* Program, consists of a set of over 30 complementary programs designed to fight the immediate and underlying causes of hunger and food insecurity implemented by the federal government or supported by it. With these programs, among others, Brazil intends to ensure its commitment to achieve

4. FATHER BETTO (Frei Betto), 2004.

5. MDS, 2005.

the Millennium Development Goals, involving not only the first goal, namely, reducing hunger and poverty, but also those related to education, health, the environment and gender equality. The Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Combat (MDS) is the coordinating agency of the Zero Hunger Program, and it assumed this responsibility in 2004, after the Extraordinary Ministry of Food Security and Hunger Combat (Mesa) was closed down. Some programs are directly implemented by the MDS, but it also contributes funds from its own budget or from other non-budget sources to other programs implemented by other ministries or institutions.

The largest programs, in terms of investments, number of beneficiaries and profile, are the following ones:

- the *Bolsa Família* (Family Grant) program, which is a cash transfer program focused on poor families that conditions the granting of its benefits to families keeping their children at school and regularly assisted by the health care system.
- National School Meal Program (Pnae), which provides meals to children in public day-care centers and schools.
- National Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming (Pronaf), which provides subsidized credit and technical services to family farmers.
- Food Acquisition Program (PAA), which consists in procuring food from family farmers to be locally distributed to different institutions and food-related programs.
- Cistern-Building Program, which builds cisterns to collect rainwater for domestic use in the semi-arid region of Brazil's northeast.

Other programs involve schemes for distributing food to excluded populations, subsidized restaurants, food banks, urban agriculture, vitamin A and iron distribution, nutrition education, nutrition monitoring, and tax incentives for companies that invest in maintaining restaurants for its employees.

Besides its coordinating role in the Zero Hunger Program, the MDS is directly responsible for the Family Grant program and for other social protection programs not included in the Zero Hunger Program. It improved the so-called Unified Record as a key tool for selecting potential beneficiaries for the Family Grant program. The ministry is also responsible for monitoring and evaluation actions.

The National Food and Nutrition Security Council (Consea), which was reestablished in 2003, brings together representatives of all relevant ministries and of civil society involved in food security-related matters to advise the government on the drawing up of policies and programs in this area. Conseas have also been set up at state and municipal level. An interministerial working group for the Zero Hunger Program was set up by the Presidency of the Republic to ensure its multi-sectoral coordination within the federal government.

The funding of activities related to the Zero Hunger Program increased significantly since it was launched. Total investments of the federal government through the budgets of Mesa/MDS and other federal departments increased from R\$ 4.9 billion in 2003 to R\$11.6 billion in 2006 in current figures. In addition, the total amount of funds available for rural credit increased significantly, from R\$ 3.8 billion to R\$ 9 billion. Additional funds have been invested in reducing hunger and promoting food security by state and municipal governments, civil society, and private companies.

## EVOLUTION AND RESULTS

Much has been done over the years by religious groups, NGOs and local authorities to address the hunger problem. Various governments adopted a large number of programs with the aim of creating better living conditions for the low-income population. Despite all of this, hunger and food insecurity continue to affect the lives of many Brazilians, preventing them from truly contributing to prosperity in the country and from benefiting from it. When it launched the Zero Hunger Program, the federal government took advantage of previous experiences and differentiated itself from other administrations by explicitly admitting that it was, in the final analysis, responsible for ensuring food and nutrition security to all Brazilians. Improved food security began to be part of a set of social rights that, linked and integrated into network systems, contribute to empower the poor, ensuring them appropriate conditions to conquer other rights as Brazilian citizens. When Mesa was created in 2003 and integrated into the MDS in the following year and when the National Food and Nutritional Security Council (Consea) was reestablished and actions to set up similar councils locally

were encouraged, the idea was to create an institutional channel for building a partnership between government and institutions of civil society committed to fighting hunger and food insecurity.

The establishment of a daring goal – making sure that all Brazilians had three meals a day by the end of the president's four-year term – was fundamental to ensure the required political priority and focus on the need for swift and comprehensive action. However, this fact generated expectations that the food insecurity problem, which has deep historical roots, could be solved overnight.

The new government faced huge difficulties to create and set in motion new institutions capable of generating a comprehensive program to address all the dimensions of the food security problem in all corners of the nation, meeting the needs of its most marginalized communities. They became even more complex due to the absence of a legal framework and procedures to implement the actions. Many results were achieved in the first year of the Zero Hunger Program, coordinated by the recently-created Extraordinary Ministry for Food Security (Mesa), particularly in the northeast region, which was chosen as a priority region for the Food Card program (which later on was incorporated into the Family Grant program), for building cisterns, and for delivering literacy courses to poor populations. However, what was accomplished in such a short time was considered insufficient in relation to the expectations of the population and this led to complaints and criticism by the media.

The government showed its boldness when it reengineered the program early in 2004, preserving its original objectives and the determination to reach them in the short run and adjusting its strategy. The changes, which led to the creation of MDS, reinforced the actions that were being carried out; the scale of the cash transfer program – the *Bolsa Família* program – was expanded as a result of its unification with the Food Card and other similar programs. And it pointed to an integration dynamics involving various social areas of the federal government based on a cross-cutting and inter-sectoral approach. Some of the structural components of the Zero Hunger Program were continued and expanded, albeit under the responsibility of other ministries. Through the set of programs that make up the Zero Hunger Program, the government was able to substantially reinforce the long-term improvement trends of nutritional and food security indicators in Brazil and is close to reaching the original

short-term goal of the program. In addition, progress was also made in creating an institutional framework and developing the country's capacity to address the structural causes of food insecurity.

Much still needs to be done to improve the efficiency, focus, impact and sustainability of the programs making up the Zero Hunger Program in the future. However, it is impressive to see what Brazil has achieved in the past three-and-a-half years taking advantage of the groundwork laid by previous programs but expanding their spread and reach, increasing their resources and adding new components to them. In mid-2006, the situation was as follows (*see Table 1*):

- 11.1 million poor families throughout Brazil – about 45 million people or 25% of the country's population – are receiving an average monthly cash transfer of about R\$ 60 through the Family Grant program, providing mothers with the means to ensure that all members of their family will have enough to eat. About 73% of the beneficiaries are in the quintile of the low-income population and 94% in the two lowest income quintiles<sup>6</sup>. The cash transfers increased the income of their beneficiaries by 21% in average.
- Recent studies carried out by the MDS show that the beneficiaries of the Family Grant program are spending approximately 76% of this amount with food and that the number of families having more frequent and more nutritional meals has increased. On the other hand, comparisons between families that do not receive cash transfers under the Family Grant program with those that do revealed that children in the 6 - 11 months age bracket of those that do not receive the benefit have a 62% probability of developing chronic undernutrition. These data were confirmed by more comprehensive surveys, and it can be concluded that the program is having a major nutritional impact as a factor of protection against chronic undernutrition<sup>7</sup>.
- It seems evident that the substantial flow of funds to poor communities under the Family Grant program has been boosting local economic growth precisely where it is most needed.

6. See CASTAÑEDA, 2005.

7. MONTEIRO, 2006.

- All Brazilian children and adolescents who attend public schools – totaling 36.3 million – have now better access to a nutritious meal every day in their day-care center, pre-school or elementary school. After almost doubling the funds allocated to each participant, the National School Meal Program (Pnae) expanded opportunities to improve the quality of the food served in schools. Some initial efforts have been made for meals served in schools to use items purchased locally from family farmers, for education on nutrition to be included in the curriculum of primary education, and for special attention to be paid to the diet needs of indigenous populations and *Quilombo* communities, so as to respect their food habits and expand the program's social impact.
- The rapid growth of Pronaf combined with a significant participation of farmers in the program's management, apart from a more intense provision of technical assistance to them and the rapid growth of subsidized credit lines, has been contributing to increase the production, inclusion and income of rural households and, according to recent studies, to boost local economies as well<sup>8</sup>.
- Almost 2 million small farmers, including farmers settled under the agrarian reform, have access to credit now, more than 700.000 of whom for the first time in their lives. Funds earmarked for credit have been increasing rapidly since 2003, hitting the mark of more than R\$ 9 billion in 2006, with a significant contribution of extra-budgetary resources. The scope and scale of harvest insurance programs for family farming have also been expanded.
- Family farmers have also enjoyed a rapid expansion of programs for procurement of their products by the National Food Supply Company (Conab) to supply the needs of emergency programs and isolated communities, favoring both these farmers and consumers.
- Since 2003, about 150,000 families living in zones affected by droughts have managed to build cisterns for them through a program implemented by an NGO network called Articulação do Semiárido (ASA), partially financed with private donations. Direct access to clean water con-

8. MATTEI, 2005.

tributes to improving nutrition and reducing child mortality, freeing up the labor force by reducing the time they were forced to spend collecting water and their economic and political dependence on water suppliers.

- Urban programs designed to improve nutritional standards among poorer groups through partnerships with local authorities, NGOs and private companies include subsidized restaurants, community kitchens, food banks and urban agriculture schemes.
- Food has been distributed under planned schemes when necessary to families affected by emergencies or indigence, including people camped while waiting to be settled under the agrarian reform program.

**Table 1 Resources of the Brazilian State invested in the Zero Hunger Program in 2003-2006 and number of beneficiaries<sup>(1)</sup>**

| Programs                      | 2003                 |                         | 2006                 |                         |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
|                               | Budget (million R\$) | Beneficiaries (million) | Budget (million R\$) | Beneficiaries (million) |
| Family Grant program          | 3360                 | 3.6 families            | 8325                 | 11.1 families           |
| PNAE                          | 954                  | 37.3 students           | 313                  | 36.3 students           |
| PAA and milk                  | 224                  | 0.05 farmers            | 621                  | 0.1 farmers             |
| Cisterns                      | 25                   | 0.03 families           | 70                   | 0.08 families (1)       |
| Urban programs <sup>(2)</sup> | 7                    | n.a.                    | 53                   | n.a.                    |
| Other <sup>(3)</sup>          | 356                  | n.a.                    | 549                  | n.a.                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                  | <b>4.926</b>         |                         | <b>11.606</b>        |                         |
| PRONAF <sup>(4)</sup>         | 3.806                | 0.9 farmers             | 9                    | 2.0 farmers             |

Source: MDS

(1) 2003-2006 accumulated total: 150,000 families.

(2) Urban agriculture, food bank, subsidized restaurants, community kitchens.

(3) Food baskets, nutrition education, vitamin A and iron distribution, inter-municipal consortia, homes, families etc.

(4) Source MDA: includes resources available for rural credit.

Beyond the formal framework for the Zero Hunger Program and without involving funds from the federal government budget, many other initiatives are contributing to improve the nutritional situation in Brazil and lay the groundwork for long-term food security. Early in 2003, the governmental capacity was exceeded by a huge volume of donations in goods and products from companies, civil society organizations and citizens. The private sector has been

particularly active in promoting, financing and managing a rapidly increasing chain of food banks in the largest Brazilian cities. Civil society organizations and movements are influencing the definition and management of policies, drawing attention to inequalities in Brazilian society, particularly in relation to land distribution, and to environmental problems, including deforestation of the Amazon forest resulting from the expansion of monoculture and risks associated to genetically modified organisms. In addition, public awareness of human rights, including of the Human Right to Adequate Food, is on the rise. Special mention should be made of a civil society initiative to distribute educational materials on nutrition in the form of millions of primers to elementary schools throughout Brazil. This initiative is particularly important in view of the aggressive advertisement campaigns of food and beverage manufacturers, which influence food habits, particularly of children.

Under Brazil's decentralized government system, each of its 5,568 municipalities is autonomous, meaning that the federal administration's capacity to implement programs at national level is relatively limited. There are two highly relevant additional implications for the Zero Hunger Program, apart from the need to always negotiate how federal policies will be implemented at local levels. The first one is that the coverage and speed of delivery of programs vary a lot from one municipality to another. The second one is that ensuring local commitment takes effort and capacity is required to make sure programs are appropriately implemented.

Since 2003, the institutional framework for fighting hunger and food insecurity was strengthened in the larger context of the Brazilian strategy to reduce poverty.

- Rebuilding Consea at national and local level provided a forum in which all key actors of government and civil society can jointly discuss topics related to food and nutrition security. The national Consea has contributed to establishing guidelines for food and nutrition policies, to the design of programs, to successful negotiations of more budget resources, and to ensuring the priorities and sound operation of programs. But, with important exceptions, state and municipal Conseas are yet to be consolidated.
- The establishment of MDS in 2004 and the unification of the main cash transfer programs made it possible to set

up, expand and progressively improve the management of the Unified Record. This expanded options to improve efficiency, reduce transaction costs both for the government and participants and enhance transparency. Today, the Unified Record is a major platform for designing and ensuring the focus of food security and poverty reduction initiatives.

- The imminent passage by the Federal Senate of the National Food and Nutrition Security Law (Losan) bill, which ensures the right of all Brazilians to adequate food, lays the foundation for creating the National Food and Nutrition Security System to ensure this right.
- The passage of a law on family farming, recognizing its economic importance (the sector contributes 40 % of the agriculture/livestock GDP), allowed for the establishment of public policies to facilitate the access of family farmers to credit, technical assistance, agricultural insurance, and mechanisms to market their products.
- An Interministerial Zero Hunger Working Group was set up by the Social Policy Chamber of the Civil House of the Presidency of the Republic to reinforce the cross-cutting nature of the programs and the multi-sectoral collaboration that characterizes their implementation.
- A special secretariat and a monitoring and evaluation system were set up within the MDS which are producing various evaluations that translate into gradual improvements in the focus and management of the programs. This system will be linked to the Food and Nutrition Surveillance System (Sisvan) implemented by the Ministry of Health and it will monitor the nutritional status of the Brazilian population at large.

Many of these concrete results are still not recognized by public opinion leaders in Brazil. Even though they were documented in various government studies and publications, the continued growth of food and nutrition security programs of the federal government is widely misunderstood and there is a perception that they are all concentrated in a single initiative – the *Bolsa Família* (Family Grant) program.

The media has been paying a lot of attention to the Zero Hunger Program, often using time in TV stations and spaces in newspapers to comment on more controversial aspects of the strategy. This has influenced public opinion on the strengths and weaknesses of the program and has contributed to correct and improve its implementation. There is a huge controversy in Brazil in relation to advertising of food and beverage products that has a negative influence on food habits, particularly of children.

Apart from its impact in Brazil, the commitment of the government to put an end to hunger and food insecurity, as expressed in the Zero Hunger Program, has produced effects in many other countries not only in Latin America, but also in Africa and Asia. The international leadership of president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has inspired other heads of State to follow the Brazilian example in the design, financing and implementation of national food security programs, which nevertheless have not yet been as effective as the Brazilian program. Brazil has been playing an increasingly significant role in international forums where food security-related topics are discussed, including the human rights to adequate food and agrarian reform. In addition, support to food security-related programs is expected to become an increasingly important component of Brazil's bilateral technical cooperation particularly with Portuguese-speaking countries, but also with Haiti, Bolivia, Peru and Paraguay. The countries that endorsed the *Initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger in 2025*, taken during the FAO Regional Conference held in Caracas in April 2006, are very interested in knowing Brazil's experience with the Zero Hunger Program. Many countries would like to expand technical cooperation arrangements with Brazil in the design and implementation of programs, but formal cooperation mechanisms are still not appropriate to meet this demand.

## MAIN LESSONS

Many lessons that are relevant to other countries can be learned with the Brazilian experience, if they are appropriately adapted to local conditions. They are also relevant to international institutions devoted to eradicating hunger, such as the FAO. These lessons include the following ones:

- agricultural growth, particularly as fostered by the agribusiness model, does not automatically result in hunger reduction and can even enhance hunger due to imperfect competition in markets (financial and product markets) and land concentration trends. Economic growth doesn't necessarily result in a proportional reduction of poverty and hunger either, particularly in economies marked by very unequal income distribution. The first of the MDGs can be achieved through specific programs aimed at addressing the underlying causes of hunger and poverty. Any progress made in reducing hunger and improving food security will be reflected in a fast decline in extreme poverty and will generate its own economic benefits.
- A strong, sustainable, and preferably non-partisan political commitment to eradicate hunger as a key national objective broadly supported by the population is essential to overcome the resistance from those who would rather preserve a situation of dependence. This commitment is reinforced when the State passes laws and approves public policies to ensure its continuity, regardless of who is the head of government.
- Objectives must be boldly and clearly set, despite any risks of low acceptance initially, due to the expectations that are generated. Any objective that limits the determination to eradicate hunger on a permanent basis and to ensure access to food to all citizens in a relatively short period is inappropriate for the required mobilization action on the necessary scale.
- It is important to act as quickly as possible to expand the capacity to produce and/or buy food of all the population facing food insecurity, while institutions, policies and programs are developed to address the complex and underlying causes of their vulnerability to hunger, undernutrition and food insecurity, respecting the rights and dignity of all. This position is fully in tune with FAO's twin-track approach recommendations.
- A multi-sectoral approach to food security is necessary, ensuring the feasibility of institutional agreements leading to a full and coordinated commitment of all organizations

dealing with food production, quality and consumption and other topics related to health care, nutrition and education, with a clear definition of responsibilities. Coordination is more effective when a large percentage of public funds is channeled through a leading agency.

- Civil society can play a vital role in the design and implementation of programs, particularly through its involvement in creating and strengthening institutions such as Consea or national alliances against hunger that may support government-civil society partnerships at national and local level. Stimulating the involvement of civil society and the private sector to eradicate hunger and ensure food security is essential, including through financings.
- In the design of programs, it is useful to differentiate needs and opportunities to improve food security in rural, urban and metropolitan areas and to develop specific programs for this purpose.
- It is important to recognize that large-scale food security programs are in a constant process of construction and, consequently, need to be corrected along the way as they are implemented. For this adjustment process to be feasible, monitoring and evaluation systems must be established from the outset to generate a continuous flow of reliable information on the actions and impact of the program, using relevant indicators to improve its management.
- Substantial investments are required in a program-managing system that, including a unified record, will make it possible to identify the beneficiaries of each program, monitor its implementation and rendering of accounts, and contribute toward improving its focus gradually.
- It should be stressed that large-scale food security/poverty reduction programs can be fiscally sustainable even in countries that are economically less developed than Brazil. In 2006, the cost of the Family Grant program amounted to only 1.0 % of the Federal Budget and 0.4 % of the estimated GDP<sup>9</sup>. The annual cost per participant was approximately 25 cents of a dollar a day, and the contribution of

9. Source: Ministry of Planning: website Resultado Primário do Governo Federal, Chapter IV, Despesas.

the school meal program cost only 0.10 cents of dollar a day/child. There is increasing evidence that the main components of the Zero Hunger Program are beginning to generate economic benefits and that they could, therefore, not be considered as spending in social protection, but rather as feasible investments.

It is important to remember that the Zero Hunger Program is still new and that it is too early to fully assess its impact on the Brazilian society and economy. This will only possible with time, when physically and mentally dwarfed children from birth begin to attend school; when those who otherwise would not attend school and would have their ability to learn affected by undernutrition enter the labor market and, as adults, are provided with better job opportunities. We will not be able to know for some time what will be the program's economic impact, particularly the impact resulting from the stimulus provided by substantial cash transfers to poor communities, by translating food needs into actual demand, and by the higher learning and working capacity of its beneficiaries. Based on the experience of other countries, we expect the cash transfers made under the Family Grant Program to result not only in better nutrition, health and productivity but also in small-scale but significant investments in food production schemes that will reduce the vulnerability of families to shocks and protect them from bankruptcy. In addition, it is expected – although this is still a speculation – that the resulting economic growth will generate tax revenues that will ensure a reasonable return on the original investment.

The Zero Hunger Program still raises a lot of discussions in Brazil, to such a point that they tend to divert attention from the major results it has achieved so far. Three topics under discussion right now are the following ones:

- The degree to which the conditionalities and social control of the program at local level should be coupled to the cash transfers of the Family Grant Program to make sure that nutritional goals are also achieved.
- The risk of creating dependencies in the long run.
- The degree of emphasis on the underlying causes of hunger to secure short-term improvements in nutritional aspects.

In relation to the first point, what seems to be important is not only the types of conditionalities that are imposed or not, but that the services provided will be improved, particularly in the areas of health care and education, including training programs for young people and adults that are accessible to the low-income population. With the expansion of nutrition education programs, possibly using the media, it might be feasible to reach not only the direct beneficiaries of the Family Grant Program, but all Brazilians. The focus should be on healthy food habits and lifestyles simultaneously, particularly on topics such as undernutrition, food insecurity and obesity, seeking to counterattack the massive impacts of the advertising of food products that generate inadequate habits, particularly among children.

In relation to the second point, it seems evident – particularly for mothers, who have to face the reality of not being able to feed their children – that nothing can induce greater dependence or threaten human dignity more than insecure access to food. This implies the need to design exit strategies for the Zero Hunger Program around the concept of building self-respect and self-confidence, bearing in mind that any action toward reducing the cash transfers before participants are truly capable of satisfying their fundamental food needs in a sustainable way would obviously be a setback.

The third point is actually that of addressing the real causes of hunger through policies designed to promote structural changes, such as the classical case of the agrarian reform to benefit rural populations with no access to land. It could be argued that this is an issue of deadlines and resources, since it is a known fact that structural changes require more tools. However, there seem to be clear advantages in the design of programs which, provided that they are feasible from the institutional and fiscal point of view, anticipate the need to create conditions to reduce the risk of dependence on cash transfers in the long run. Cash transfers should, in themselves, create some of the conditions that allow for hunger to be eradicated once and for all. However, they are not sufficient and need to be complemented by large-scale capacity-building and job generation programs and, in many cases, by arrangements to redistribute land and other assets.

These and many other aspects must be considered by other countries in the process of preparing their national food security

programs adapted to their unique and local needs, based on the encouraging Brazilian experience to the extent that they consider relevant. Discussions are important, but if there is a lesson to be learned with Brazil it is that of accepting that we are in a learning process. What we do know is that when the survival of many people is at stake, it is better to embark on large-scale programs right away, even with imperfect knowledge and information, accepting failures and correcting paths subsequently, than postponing necessary actions and doing nothing until a consensus is reached.

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## 7. FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY AND CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMS<sup>1</sup>

Maya Takagi

### INTRODUCTION

Recently, the FAO disseminated the report *The state of food insecurity in the world – 2006*. According to that annual report, no major progress has been observed in hunger reduction in the world since the World Food Summit was held, in 1996. In 2003, there were 854 million people with a calorie intake of less than 1,900 calories a day. Of these, 820 million lived in developing countries.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, there was a reduction from 59.4 million malnourished people in 1990-1992 to 52.4 million in 2001-2003. This reduction represents 10% of the population of the continent. However, it was seen that while undernutrition decreased in South America and the Caribbean, it increased in Central America from 17% to 20% of the population and remained at 5% in Mexico over the same period.

These data show that there is still a lot to be done for the millennium goal of reducing hunger by half by 2015 to be achieved. In addition, they afford an opportunity for advances in existing policies and programs in meeting the needs of groups that are more vulnerable to hunger to be assessed, especially in Latin America.

Particularly in relation to this point, one can see that two main, non-mutually exclusive trends prevail in countries of the continent: countries that are making an effort to implement food security policies and measures to fight hunger and those which, simultaneously or not, are adopting cash transfer programs for poorer populations.

1. This text is an updated and summarized version of a text presented at the Seminar *Transferencia de Ingresos y Seguridad Alimentaria: puertas de salida a la pobreza extrema*, held on December 4-5, 2006 in Santiago, Chile.

In connection with the former group, the case of Brazil stands out. The country has been dealing with this topic as a top government priority after president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was elected, in 2002. His government is implementing what has become known worldwide as the *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger) Program, the purpose of which is implementing a Food and Nutrition Security Policy in Brazil<sup>2</sup>. President Lula has been defending the need to give top priority to these topics at UN meetings.

Based on Brazil's example and relying on the support from international organizations such as FAO itself, the World Bank and others, several other countries have been discussing and implementing programs focused on achieving the United Nations goals. Some of the most evident examples are those of Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Bolivia and Venezuela, which have been investing in proposals to fight poverty and hunger and to promote food security.

At the same time, a trend toward expanding cash transfer programs on the continent with a focus on fighting poverty has been observed. The origin of such programs in Latin America is also attributed to Brazil, which implemented, in 1995, a cash transfer program still at municipal level involving the conditionality of keeping children at school. That program was implemented as a federal program in 2001. As of 2003, with the merger of different programs that were being implemented in Brazil, the *Bolsa Família* (Family Grant) Program came into being. Today, it covers 11 million families, which is the total estimated number of poor families in the country. Another precursor example is that of the *Oportunidades* (opportunities) program of Mexico, which was launched in 1996 with the name Progresa.

Experiences in the two countries are contributing to expand programs of this kind in various countries of the continent, such as in Colombia (*Familias en Acción*); Honduras (*Programa e Asignación Familiar* – PRAF); Jamaica (Program of Advancement through Health and Education – PATH); Nicaragua (*Red de Protección Social* – RPS); Chile (*Chile Solidario*) and Argentina (*Jefes y Jefas*)<sup>3</sup>.

2. See INSTITUTO CIDADANIA (Citizenship Institute), 2001.

3. According to a presentation made by Gustavo Gordillo de Anda, FAO Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean, at a Seminar marking two years of the Family Grant program that was held in Brasília in October 2005.

Even though these programs were created and encouraged in different periods and were based on a different conceptual groundwork, this article supports the notion that it is possible to advance in integrating the two proposals and proposes some paths for such integration.

This article is divided into four parts: the first one addresses the distinction between fighting poverty and fighting hunger and different measuring mechanisms available today based on surveys; the second part deals with some aspects that define the Food Security Policy implemented since the Zero Hunger Program was launched in Brazil; the third one addresses the relationship between the Food and Nutrition Security Policy and cash transfer programs; and the fourth part discusses the necessary institutional framework for implementing a Food and Nutrition Security Policy in a country.

### DISTINCTION BETWEEN FIGHTING POVERTY AND FIGHTING HUNGER

In countries where aggregate food supply is relatively adequate from the point of view of production (not necessarily of prices), the big danger is mixing up food security with poverty, particularly extreme poverty.

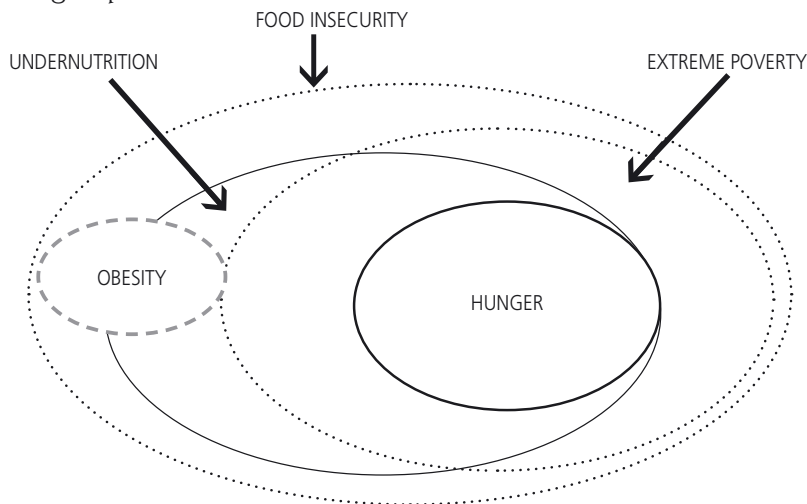
First of all, it is important to bear in mind that food security is a policy applied to the population at large and not only to the poor portion of it. Typical food security policies such as food and nutrition education, product labeling, food quality and safety, among others, are good examples of policies that affect all people, regardless of their income.

However, it is also true that hunger is an emergency aspect of food security in developing countries which produce agricultural surpluses for export. And hunger is derived from the lack of purchasing power of much of the population as a result of low household income levels. However, it would be a mistake to imagine that a general policy against poverty would be sufficient to tackle all the causes of hunger (MONTEIRO, 2003). This is so because, even in developing countries with agricultural surpluses, hunger has at least two very distinct causes: the first one is food shortage, that is, food prices are high in relation to prevailing wages as a result of production and/or distribution problems; the second one occurs

when although food is relatively cheap, the low income level of families does not allow them to nourish themselves appropriately due to the weight of other fundamental expenses such as rent, transportation, education, health care expenses, etc.

It is important to distinguish food security policies and, more specifically, policies against hunger from those intended to fight poverty in general.

The first reason for this is that, as opposed to the situation in developed countries, where poverty is restricted to specific social groups (ethnic minorities, families headed by women and elderly people, among others), poverty affects a high percentage of the population in Latin America and has well-known structural causes (income and land concentration, low wage levels, etc.). Therefore, focused cash transfer programs can only reduce the suffering of literally excluded families. They must be complemented by other structuring actions designed to promote social inclusion in behalf of socially marginalized groups.



There is a second reason why a food security policy – and particularly a policy against hunger – should not be diluted in a general policy against poverty, namely, although the relationship between hunger and poverty constitutes a vicious circle, hunger is at the root of poverty and is one of its main causes. A hungry person cannot be a productive individual, cannot work, cannot be healthy. He or she might even be able to attend school, but will not be able to learn much in it.

On the other hand, a well-nourished individual can be poor, but he or she will have the minimum conditions to respond to the stimuli of an educational policy, of a professional requalification policy, etc.

For this reason, it can be said that food security is part of what Sen (1988) referred to as a “person’s entitlements to food,” which according to the author can be translated into the fundamental right to food. The word entitlement means more than any right, as it refers to something that is at the same level as the right to life, something that is part of the fundamental rights of human beings in their essence. In other words: denying the right of a person to adequate food is depriving him or her from the right to a healthy life or from an attribute of his or her own human condition.

According to De Haen (2004), hunger is at once a cause and a consequence of poverty. For this reason, the author believes that a twin-track approach is necessary to fighting hunger. On the one hand, it is necessary to invest in productive sectors to create opportunities for those who face hunger to have better living conditions and become full citizens. This includes promoting agriculture and rural development through policy reforms and investments in agriculture. Agriculture is not the only source of food, but together with non-agricultural rural activities it generates jobs and income for the large majority of the world’s poor.

However, the extent to which those who face hunger can enjoy advantages afforded by economic opportunities depends on the extent to which they are well-fed, in good health and know how to read and write. Improvements in nutrition are therefore a prerequisite for the poor to take full advantage of opportunities created by development.

On the other hand, it is necessary to ensure more direct and immediate access to food to those facing hunger through different safety and social assistance nets. These can include cash and food transfer programs as well as food and nutrition programs such as school meal programs and nutrition supplementation interventions.

De Haen’s (2004) conclusion is that focusing only on poverty reduction will not “automatically” solve the hunger problem. While hunger is often the main cause of poverty, improvements in nutrition are necessary for reducing poverty.

## HOW CAN FOOD (IN)SECURITY BE MEASURED?

According to De Haen (2004), using indicators to determine the number of people facing food insecurity is very important both for monitoring and selecting beneficiaries for programs meant to fight hunger. They should be used to provide a better understanding of people facing hunger, where they live and why they are facing this problem.” According to the author,

“there are many indicators for food security, each of which measures a different aspect of it. No isolated measure is sufficient. On the contrary, a sequence of indicators is necessary to understand food insecurity in all its complexity and to know who is facing hunger, where those who are starving live and why they are starving.”

According to the author, there are five main indicators of food insecurity:

- a) Food availability, as measured by the total supply of calories and distribution of the access to calories. The FAO uses this measure in its statistics of evolution of hunger in the world and it has the merit of being a practical indicator for subsequent global guidance, as it can be calculated for almost all countries<sup>4</sup>.
- b) Food input, which measures the physical amount of food available for consumption at domestic level.
- c) Nutritional status, based on anthropometric measures such as stunting (weight-height ratio). These indicators are available only for children and are mainly based on primary health surveys.
- d) Vulnerability, which can be measured based on profiles of available livelihoods or self-supply (production for one's own consumption);
- e) Access to food, based on the household capacity to have a basic set of food products (through income or some other valid means).

4. AO's measure of undernutrition (or hunger) begins with the per capita level of caloric availability per country and then it combines the commitment of distribution with a minimum demographically adjusted demand (cut-off line). The result is an estimate of the number of malnourished people. More recent calculations suggest that 842 million people are malnourished in the world at large. Most of them (505 million) live in Asia and in the Pacific region, followed by 198 million in Sub-Saharan Africa. Approximately 53 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean are malnourished. For more details, see DE HAEN, 2004.

A study carried out by Takagi, Del Grossi and Graziano da Silva (2001) identified different methods available for measuring the population that does not have enough to eat, which fall under two main groups: the direct method and the indirect method. Through surveys or anthropometric data, the direct method captures the number of people and families with insufficient calorie and protein intake. It makes it possible to assess, for example, the appropriateness of food intake or of the population's weight-height ratio. It allows for the continued effect of insufficient food on one's body to be measured, but not potential hunger and food insecurity risks.

National statistics that measure people facing hunger directly are restricted to the Body Mass Index (BMI), which relate the weight to the height of individuals (individuals with indices below 18.5 kg/m<sup>2</sup> are considered malnourished). This index is not comprehensive enough, as it identifies people suffering continued calorie intake shortages in terms of "quantities" but does not include those who are not eating enough (in terms of quality) or have irregular access to food. It is not sufficient, therefore, to identify people facing food insecurity who have not reached such state of deprivation, which would jeopardize their vital functions. In addition, identifying these people through censuses is difficult.

The National Health and Nutrition Survey of 1989 indicated that 4.9% of all adults above the age of 25 in the population as a whole were below the minimum level, while the figure for rural areas in the northeast region was 9.4% (MONTEIRO, 1995). The last Household Budget Survey (HBS), which is carried out by IBGE, also calculated the population's BMI, but only data for adults above 20 years old were disseminated. The study indicated the existence of a weight deficit in 4% of all adults, a figure that is considered within a normal range for Brazil, where there are naturally thin people. However, the index was not uniform for all conditions and regions and it was higher for women aged between 20 and 24 years old (12%), in the 20-29 age bracket (7%) and of all ages in rural areas of the northeast region (7%)<sup>5</sup>. On the other hand, the same survey showed that overweight prevailed in 40.6% of the population, totaling 38.5 million adults, 11% of whom (10.5 million) were obese (IBGE, 2004).

5. According to a text prepared by the CGPAN/MS for inclusion in the 2005 Report on the Millennium Development Goals.

The indirect method is used to infer if a population is not eating enough through indicators other than calorie consumption and anthropometric data. The main variable used in indirect methods is the per capita family income. The basic assumption is that lack of income is the main factor preventing people from having enough to eat. The FAO methodology is based on the availability of food in a country and calculates the total number of available calories per capita (local production minus the agricultural trade balance and food stocks). Next, it uses food consumption and income distribution indicators to estimate inequality in access to food and determines the percentage of people whose food consumption is below previously defined minimum needs, who are considered malnourished people.

However, this measurement procedure used by FAO is not seen as sufficiently precise, as it is based on data on total calorie availability produced by estimating agricultural losses in agro-industrial processing and transportation. According to FAO itself, the method tends to underestimate the actual number of malnourished people in a country and lends itself more for comparisons between countries and for assessing the potential capacity of agriculture in each country to feed its population.

The method that is most used in countries is that of income insufficiency, which is adopted in most studies on indigence and hunger both in Brazil and in international organizations such as Eclac and the World Bank.

It basically consists in defining a certain indigence and/or poverty line and calculating the number of families whose income is below that line. In reality, the poor population estimated using this approach does not reveal the percentage of people who are truly “starving,” since part of this population might be covered by programs under which food baskets, food stamps, donations, etc. are distributed.

The criterion for defining the indigence/poverty line and the regionalization and monetary correction method are the elements that lead to the differences observed in the figures suggested by the different studies carried out so far. Among these, special mention should be made of those that define this line based on a certain income, which is unique for a given country and usually a percentage of the minimum wage, or which use household consumption as the basis for their calculations.

Rocha (2000) analyzed different studies and methodologies that use the consumption framework to define the indigence and poverty line. According to the author, they involve many steps where certain “arbitrary” decisions are taken until the indigent and poor population is defined. As a result, each calculation is unique and incomparable with other forms of calculation (the author calculated that, depending on the measures adopted, the indigence line can vary by 50 % and the poverty line can vary by up to 127 %). These differences result from the options adopted to define the indigence and poverty lines in relation to: the definition of the recommended quantities of calories; definition of the lowest-cost food basket; estimate of non-food consumption; estimate of differences in costs of living for a country’s regions and updating of monetary values for the indigence and poverty lines.

The concepts of food insecurity and hunger are, in turn, associated with a concrete measuring factor: access to food and its actual consumption, which are difficult to capture, as they require specific surveys<sup>6</sup>. The US is a country experienced in this kind of measuring. Since 1977, it has been calculating the number of households facing food insecurity based on direct questions (self-reported). However, the methodology has been improved and applied in an unprecedented way since the 1908s (BICKEL; ANDREWS, 2002). According to a statistical study based on answers provided by families on food consumption<sup>7</sup>, it was concluded that households follow a behavior based on the resources available to them: first, they save money consuming increasingly cheap food items but preserving the same quantity until they exhaust all possibilities of replacing them based on their prices and begin to eat less, reaching the hunger threshold.

The authors reached the conclusion that hunger “is an objective behavior phenomenon, meaning that, in principle, it is directly measurable” (BICKEL; ANDREWS, 2002, p. 49). This study influenced the annual reports on the labor force in the US as follows: “hunger can be present even when there are no clinical symptoms of deprivation: a situation in which someone cannot obtain an adequate amount of food, even if the shortage is not prolonged enough

6. IBGE’s National Household Sample Survey (Pnad) of 2004 incorporated the concept of food and nutrition security and launched a specific supplement of this survey in April 2006.

7. The questions comprise two basic elements: whether the families were having enough to eat and whether the food items involved were the ones that the families wanted to consume.

to cause health problems. It is the experience of being unsatisfied, of not getting enough to eat.” (1984 Report on the Labor Force, apud BICKEL; ANDREWS, 2002, p. 50).

As a result of its advances, the US adopted, in 1995, a constant methodology for measuring food insecurity. Based on this methodology, it was seen that 10.5% of all households in the US were facing food insecurity in 2000, 3.1% of which had one or more members who had experienced hunger for a certain period of the year.

In Brazil, a similar survey is the Household Budget Survey carried out by IBGE. In the last one, which produced data for the 2002-2003 period, 46.6% of all Brazilian families reported that they were facing difficulties to get enough food and for 13.8% of them this was a frequent difficulty. In the north region, the percentages were 63.9% and 17.2%, respectively, and in the southeast region they were 60.8% and 19.3%, which are extremely high figures that reveal the seriousness of the problem in the country.

The results of the Household Budget Survey carried out in 2004 led to a large debate on the need to adopt policies to fight hunger in a country with increasing numbers of obese people in all income brackets. However, these data only suggest that the hunger and food insecurity concepts imply quite different measuring results.

With the Special Supplement on Food Security disseminated by IBGE in April 2006, a relatively new food security concept was quantified for the first time for Brazil at large based on the US methodology<sup>8</sup>.

Food insecurity applies to both those who have been facing hunger for some time and to those who are worried about the possibility of facing hunger, who fall under the categories of light insecurity (those who may face hunger), moderate insecurity (those facing qualitative hunger as a result of not consuming certain food items and replacing them with cheaper ones) and severe insecurity (those who are already facing a situation of not having enough to eat).

Food insecurity is therefore more comprehensive than the measurement of hunger based on undernutrition, which only measures its biological impact (low weight or low height–age ratio). As we have always stressed in the Zero Hunger Project, the role of a

8. For more details see BICKEL; ANDREWS, 2002.

comprehensive policy against hunger is not that of assisting only those who are already suffering the effects of hunger on a daily basis, but also those who are on the verge of facing such situation, acting in a preventive fashion.

The study found out that, unfortunately, 1/4 of all Brazilian homes (about 10 million homes or 40 million people) were facing moderate and serious food insecurity in 2004 and that 6.5% of them (about 14 million people) were experiencing severe food deprivation.

It is a known fact that food insecurity is a particularly serious problem in certain regions of Brazil. In the north and north-east regions, it is experienced by certain family groups, particularly families with children. The survey showed that half of all children and young people lived in homes that were facing food insecurity in those regions.

The IBGE survey also showed that about 2 million families facing food insecurity in September 2004 were not being assisted by cash transfer programs. It is very likely, however, that they are now being assisted by such programs, as their coverage was recently expanded to 11 million families.

The survey also revealed that 2/3 of the families covered by cash transfer programs in September 2004 still faced food insecurity. This is a sign that the program is assisting those truly in need, but also that the cash transfers are not sufficient, in themselves, to ensure access to adequate food on a regular basis. Based on the survey data, it can also be inferred that the priority attached to fighting hunger has produced results for the country, as it points to a high correlation between low income and food insecurity. With the reduction in poverty observed between 2002 and 2004 (about 3 million people moved out of poverty), thanks to a higher availability of jobs and to cash transfers, it can be said that food insecurity was worse in the past.

According to Eclac (2004), extreme poverty and hunger, albeit closely related, are not coincidental phenomena. According to data analyzed by Eclac, extreme poverty explains about half the differences observed in the magnitude of undernutrition in countries: 49% of the variation in the global undernutrition rate and 57% of the variation in moderate-serious chronic undernutrition among countries are attributed to differences in the percentage of

extreme poverty. Other factors that explain these differences are the following ones: schooling of the mothers, distribution of food in the household in favor of children and to the detriment of mothers, social protection nets, adaptations to a lower calorie intake, such as less physical activity.

As a result, although fighting extreme poverty is a major requirement for reducing hunger, efforts to reduce it should not, alone, be expected to eradicate hunger in a reasonable deadline. What this means is that increasing the income of poor families does not necessarily and automatically lead to a significant reduction in undernutrition. Other factors such as sanitary conditions in the household, access to drinking water and sanitation, access to health care services, knowledge of hygiene principles and of how to handle food, and appropriate food habits are equally important (ECLAC, 2004).

The consequence of this distinction is that ways of fighting hunger, food insecurity and poverty also are distinct. This aspect will be addressed in the next section, using the Zero Hunger Program as an example.

## THE FOOD SECURITY POLICY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE ZERO HUNGER PROGRAM

Based on the original proposal of the Zero Hunger Project, it can be seen that the Food Security Policy is much more comprehensive than Cash Transfer Programs. While the Food Security Policy is designed to improve the inter-relationships between food production, marketing and consumption, cash transfers are more intended to improve food consumption or access to food.

The Zero Hunger Project was conceived to tackle food insecurity by improving the income level of segments of the Brazilian population that are considered poor. It was based on the assumption that the hunger problem in Brazil is much more related to insufficient income than to lack of food supply or food shortage.

The conclusion of the study is that “poverty is not occasional,” but rather the result of a perverse economic growth model, based on very low salaries, which has led to increasing income concentration and unemployment. These are the elements that led to the diagnosis that the hunger problem in Brazil

involves three fundamental dimensions: the first one is insufficient demand, derived from the country's income concentration, high unemployment and underemployment levels, and low purchasing power of the salaries paid to the majority of the working class. The second one is inconsistency between current food prices and the low purchasing power of the majority of its population. And the third but not less important one is the exclusion of poorer population segments from the market, many of whose members are unemployed or underemployed workers, elderly people, children and other groups in need of emergency assistance (Citizenship Institute, 2001, p. 81).

According to the program's proposal, for hunger to be eradicated in Brazil once and for all, a new economic development model is necessary to favor growth with income distribution, so that the country's domestic market can be expanded while jobs are generated, salaries are improved and, more specifically, the purchasing power of the minimum wage is recovered, as it is sort of a "headlight" for the income of the poorest segments of the population.

Therefore, the central axis of the project lied "in an appropriate combination between so-called structural policies – designed to promote income redistribution, production growth, job generation, agrarian reform, etc. – and emergency interventions, often referred to as compensatory policies" (Citizenship Institute, 2001, p. 5).

Its innovative feature lied in the organization of its proposals around three action levels simultaneously: structural policies to fight the causes of hunger by, for example, raising the family income, ensuring universal access to social rights and quality food, and reducing income inequalities; specific food and nutrition security policies comprising emergency actions but not restricted to such actions; and local policies involving differentiated actions according to the size of each municipality.

Some conceptual advances that were considered important in the process of implementing the Zero Hunger Program of the federal administration since 2003 will be presented next.

### **"TERRITORIAL" FOOD SECURITY AND EXPANSION OF THE PROGRAM IN BRAZIL'S SEMI-ARID REGION**

One of the strategic approaches of the Zero Hunger Project is that of strengthening the notion that food and nutrition security are

indissolubly associated with the area in which a family lives, with its proximity to local and regional food supply sources, and with the availability of public and private facilities in immediately surrounding areas: this is why food and nutrition security must be ensured in a territorial fashion, boosting the local and regional economy.

The strategy adopted by the Zero Hunger Program was one of starting to implement it based on territorial criteria, that is, on the selection of areas located near one another (small municipalities in the semi-arid region and in the north region and micro-regions with inter-municipal consortia under way). It all began with a cash transfer strategy, the *Cartão Alimentação* (Food Card) program.

The Food Card program consisted in transfers R\$ 50.00, which was estimated by the National Food Supply Company (Conab) as the necessary amount to buy a basic set of quality food items, to poor families registered in the preexisting Unified Record, in partnership with states and municipalities. The funds were to be transferred through withdrawals from current accounts using magnetic cards issued in the name of the mothers of the families. The records of registered families were validated by local Managing Committees made up of a majority of civil society representatives (2/3) and representatives of the local government (1/3), which was in charge of managing the record.

Apart from the initial design of the Food Card Program in the semi-arid region, the following programs were planned and given priority to: a program for coexistence with droughts consisting in incentives to food production, water supply and construction of cisterns; expansion of the school meal program by increasing fund transfers to municipalities, provided that the additional funds were used to diversify meals served in public schools, pre-schools and children's education facilities; municipal food procurement from local family farmers; integration between cash transfer programs and literacy, professional training, and food education programs; incentives to local programs – subsidized restaurants and food banks – and implementation of the Sisvan – Food and Nutrition Surveillance System – to monitor the population's nutritional status in all cycles of life focusing on the population covered by the SUS – Unified Health System.

This strategy is valid because although the structural causes of food insecurity faced by families are related to macroeconomic

factors (employment and income levels), these are also related to territorial factors such as low dynamism of the local/regional economy, poor infrastructure, lack of access to basic goods and services, such as piped water, sanitation and housing, and low diversity of the local food production. These are factors well beyond causes related to individual options, such as schooling, basic health care for children, and participation in professional training courses, which are also important but should not be seen as exclusive solutions. Opting for the latter would mean, in the final analysis, blaming the families and individuals themselves for their situation of vulnerability.

For this reason, one way of building “ways out” of vulnerability together with the provision of emergency assistance to ensure access to food is to implement universal and job and income generation policies “at the same time,” enhancing their effects locally and for more vulnerable families.

This is not an immediate process and it may take years to consolidate it. This is so because it requires a strong co-participation of state and municipal governments in actions focused on the territory and on the families, apart from a strong interministerial action on the part of the federal government.

This strategy was particularly successful in the two pilot municipalities of the Zero Hunger Program: Guaribas and Acauã in the State of Piauí. The co-participation of the state government in the state-level coordination of the program played a key role in ensuring the results that were achieved. A report prepared by Ministry of Food Security and Hunger Combat (Mesa) in June 2003 about the work carried out in the two municipalities describes the dozens of simultaneous actions that were implemented in them.

The report mentions the following actions that were carried out after the Zero Hunger Program was implemented in the two municipalities: implementation of a simplified water supply system in Guaribas, a municipality that did not have a drinking water reservoir before; construction of 200 homes for low-income families; literacy courses delivered to almost 600 people; civil registration of dozens of dwellers; construction of a public market in Guaribas and of spaces for open-air markets in the two municipalities; preparation of the first local development plan for the two municipalities; implementation of a community radio station in

Guaribas (its first local radio station), including training courses for its managers and producers.

In addition, training for multipliers in strategies intended to promote healthy food habits and alternatives based on the local culture was delivered in partnership with Embrapa, with the aim of increasing and diversifying local food supply, improving the diet of families, and increasing the income of local farmers; training courses on food and hygiene were also delivered in partnership with the Federal University of Piau , with a special focus on children under 1, with the aim of reducing undernutrition and child mortality.

Farmers in Guaribas were provided with technical support to sow and sell their bean harvest to the National Food Supply Company, which ended up improving the price offered to farmers, increasing their income.

A local economy boosted by cash transfers and other actions led to the emergence of small businesses, such as a barber shop and a hotel, and to the construction of a beauty parlor, a drugstore and snack bars.

We believe that these experiences are feasible and applicable in all corners of the country, as they raise the dignity and improve the living conditions of populations that have been historically “forgotten” by public authorities. The prerequisite for their success is an agreement involving the three levels of government to attach priority to regions in which poverty is concentrated, to improve the local infrastructure, to ensure access to basic and universal collective services and goods such as water supply, sanitation and housing, and to implement, at the same time, programs aimed at improving access to food. A report prepared by the Piau  State Coordinating Board for Food Security and Hunger Eradication – Zero Hunger Project – for the 2003-2005 period shows how much progress was made as a result of the set of activities that were jointly implemented by the state and federal governments.

This strategy can be also be enhanced by territorial development programs that are being implemented by ministries such as the Ministry of Agrarian Development, through the Territorial Development Secretariat, the Consads, and the MDS, and by projects for priority meso-regions being implemented by the Ministry of National Integration. The implementation of Central Family Farm-

ing Marketing Facilities (*Centrais de Comercialização da Agricultura Familiar*) by the Ministry of Agrarian Development in different regions is a concrete result of this strategy<sup>9</sup>.

It is clearly easier to achieve this result in the model for small and medium-sized cities. In large cities and metropolitan regions, macroeconomic factors related to employment and income are much stronger determinants of vulnerability for families. The Zero Hunger Project considered that the percentage of unemployed people in poor populations in metropolitan areas was ten times higher than in poor populations in rural areas, and twice as high as in non-metropolitan urban areas (CITIZENSHIP INSTITUTE, 2001). In addition, given their dimension and the fact that they are more scattered, the “leakage” of resources to other more dynamic regions is much greater and it would be much harder to boost the local economy through the cash transfers to families. Because the cost of living of families in metropolitan areas is higher, the amount of the cash transfer can only meet a limited part of the basic needs of the population in these areas. Another clear aggravating factor is the dismemberment of the family unit in large cities, which makes it more difficult to rebuild identities and family and community bonds.

In these cases, macroeconomic policies capable of creating more jobs and income, combined with actions to enhance access to housing, sanitation and food at cheaper prices, are by far the best path to follow. Actions to ensure access to food at a low cost, such as the PAT – Workers’ Food Program, subsidized restaurants, food banks and vegetable gardens in urban areas also have a positive impact on food security for urban families and workers.

## PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT

Participatory management is another determinant factor for the success of a Food and Nutrition Security Policy. According to Dean (2005), human rights have been colonized as a result of a managerial approach to human development, exposing the social rights cause to the risk of being replaced by liberal individualism.

9. The Central Family Farming Marketing Facilities are intended to support regional projects designed to ensure fairer prices and market inclusion to family farmers on a permanent basis. There are plans to implement 39 of these central marketing facilities and 21 Integrated Rural Business Centers (*Centros Integrados de Negócios Rurais*).

In the new liberal order, more emphasis is placed on social responsibility and self-provisioning than on the notion of rights associated with the provision of social security and collective well-being.

In order to eliminate this risk, the author believes that it is necessary to recover the notion of human rights not only from the point of view of social rights, but rather, on the one hand, from the standpoint of global responsibilities and, on the other, of local needs. According to the author, this implies not an immediatist reinforcement of social rights, but rather the progressive development of social protection and good governance networks through, for example, the formulation of demands for democratically negotiated resources. This requires more authentic and effective grassroots participation.

In Brazil, much progress has been made in establishing social control and participation institutions since the enactment of the Constitution of 1988, which provided for the institutionalization of councils for managing sectoral policies or public policy councils at the federal, state and municipal levels (SCHNEIDER; SILVA; MARQUES, 2004).

However, because it was seen that existing councils were not as active as they should, particularly in the northeast and north regions, and in view of the need to implement the Zero Hunger Program at a fast pace and of the impossibility of quickly registering people to be assisted by it, Mesa decided to implement Managing Committees (CGs) as bodies in charge of the social control of the Food Card Program.

This was an innovative way of involving the communities themselves in identifying and selecting beneficiaries and in monitoring the program's results. It was also a means to make the three governmental spheres co-responsible for the program, with state-level coordinating bodies of the Zero Hunger Program operating as the executive arm of the program and as the link between the federal administration and municipalities, which were charged with setting up and maintaining the infrastructure of the Managing Committees and with managing the Unified Record.

According to Gomes (2003), the regional coordinator of the Zero Hunger Program in the northeast region, what people were saying in the municipalities covered by the program was that,

for the first time in Brazil, the monopoly of municipal power in the management of public policies was being broken and the gap be-

tween their objectives and the demands from their beneficiaries was being reduced. [...] These achievements, this overcoming of resistances, did not come about without heated debates between often antagonist groups in the local political arena. The higher percentage of civil society representatives in the Managing Committees and appeals for sectors of local society to be represented in them led to a quick and surprising process of social organization or to its consolidation, when it was already under way. A true army of anonymous volunteers was established moved by different aspirations, but mostly by the desire to break away from the traditional local political clientelism.

This form of participatory management was not without problems, but it also brought about major advances in terms of raising the awareness of the local population and building citizenship rights.

Ortega (2003) assessed the operation of the program in the states of Paraíba, Rio Grande do Norte and Pernambuco between July and August 2003. The main positive aspects that he observed were the following ones:

- the program had truly reached those in greater need in the municipalities;
- the grant was being spent with food and was encouraging local family farming. In the municipalities where the managing committees held meetings to explain the Zero Hunger Program to the population, families began to support the idea that their focused consumption boosted the local economy;
- boosted local economies, particularly in the food trade sector, were promoting a more formal economy;
- the linking of actions between the Zero Hunger Program and state governments was creating better conditions for the program's success. This was more clearly evinced by actions to provide people with basic civil documents and to deliver literacy courses to young people and adults;
- the Managing Committees were ensuring the political inclusion of social actors who had been excluded from the political system in the past.

This innovative initiative of the Managing Committees was,

however, short-lived and lost momentum after all cash transfer programs were unified, as did a debate on the unification of municipal councils.

In 2005, the government defined rules for municipalities to join the program. For this purpose, they would have to appoint a municipal manager for the program and set up a social control council with equal representation of government and society. The program's social control could be taken care of by previously existing bodies, such as those in charge of ensuring social control of past programs or sectoral councils set up to monitor other policies, provided that inter-sectoral requirements were met and equal representation of government and society was assured.

Once the process of joining the program was completed, the result was a shift in the focus of the Managing Committees, which were trained in food security and in the structuring actions of the Zero Hunger Program to develop closer links with social assistance councils. In 79 % of the municipalities, the manager in charge of the program was a professional with a social work background, as were most of the members of the Social Control Councils that were set up. Of all councils of the federal government, 42 % were specifically established for the program and 58 % were created from pre-existing councils. 83.7 % of them were linked to social assistance councils, 1.3 % to the health area and 0.6 % to education, according to data provided by the MDS – Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Combat – in July 2006.

### **STRENGTHENING OF SPECIFIC GROUPS (INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, *QUILOMBO* COMMUNITIES, FAMILY FARMERS)**

A factor that is highlighted in the Zero Hunger Program is the greater protagonism of organized groups in the management of policies focused on specific communities, such as indigenous and *Quilombo* communities and family farmers.

At the same time, various actions designed for these groups were expanded: the resources made available for providing credit to family farmers through the Pronaf<sup>10</sup> were gradually expanded from R\$ 2.4 billion in the 2003-2004 harvest to R\$ 9 billion in the

10. National Household Agriculture Program, which provides differentiated credit lines to family farmers.

2005-2006 harvest, constituting a nominal increase of 275 %.

The Crop Guarantee Program was implemented in the semi-arid region to cover losses caused by droughts as a form of insurance. In the 2004-2005 harvest, a family farming insurance scheme was redesigned to guarantee, for the first time ever, 100 % coverage for loans plus 65 % coverage for the net revenue expected from projects financed by family farmers<sup>11</sup>.

Another example is the self-organization of food distribution schemes by families camped while waiting to be settled under the agrarian reform program. Incra (National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform) took food to the camps, but its distribution to camped families was taken care of by their own organizations based on a community approach.

An important process was the identification of *Quilombola* families to receive food, which was also done with the participation of their communities and involved a diagnosis of priority income-generating community projects as well. Funds were transferred to projects such as small flour mills, handicraft projects, vegetable gardens and small agriindustrial schemes.

Indigenous and *Quilombola* groups also rely on Standing Chambers in the Consea council for discussing specific policies such as the *Quilombola* Brazil Program and the Food Security Policy for indigenous populations.

An outcome associated with the Food Acquisition Program (PAA) and with the resuming of food supply schemes for specific groups is that 40 % of the food distributed by the National Food Supply Company in 2005 was procured from family farmers, a percentage that has been increasing as the PAA evolves. The implementation of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy, albeit incipient, has certainly contributed to ensuring greater social protection to these groups and to strengthening their organization.

## CASH TRANSFER AND FOOD SECURITY

In October 2003, the Family Grant Program unified the main cash transfer programs implemented until then: the Food Card (*Cartão Alimentação*), the School Grant (*Bolsa Escola*), and the Food Grant (*Bolsa Alimentação*) programs. In practice, the R\$ 50.00

11. Source: MDA website: [www.mda.gov.br/saf](http://www.mda.gov.br/saf).

granted under the Food Card Program, implemented early in 2003, became the floor amount of the Family Grant program and made it possible to significantly increase the average cash transfer per family (from a national average of R\$ 20.00-25.00 to a then estimated average of R\$ 70.00-75.00 with the *Bolsa Família* program). The R\$ 15.00 per child granted under the School Grant and the Food Grant programs were unified at R\$ 15.00 per child up to three children per family at most. Therefore, the maximum amount granted under the program rose to R\$ 95.00 and the minimum one to R\$ 50.00.

The objective was to establish a large cash transfer program covering all poor families with a considerable budget guaranteed year after year, which in the end would amount to R\$ 11 billion a year.

The main difficulty to associate a minimum income program with a right lies in the subjective nature of the income cut-off line: why is it that a family with a per capita income below R\$ 100.00 should have this right while another one with a per capita income of R\$ 100.50 should not? How should the poverty line be updated over time? Based on what criterion? What is the criterion for families to leave the program, if a family continues to face social vulnerability even if its income increases a little?

In the light of these considerations, it can be seen that the main factors that can lead to the adoption of a cash transfer program with a focus on food and nutrition security are the following ones:

- linking of the cash transfer to a policy aimed at ensuring access to the human right to food as a State policy and not as a policy of government;
- establishment of a political priority, preferably by the President of the Nation, to fight hunger through a National Food and Nutrition Security Policy;
- adoption of criteria for selecting the beneficiary audience: more than simply checking whether the criteria set for defining the poverty line are being met and having a record of beneficiaries, it is important to check other criteria as well, such as the existence of serious or moderate food insecurity in a family for admission to the program. For this reason, selecting potential beneficiaries through qualitative surveys and local health agents is important to guar-

- antee the human right to food;
- amount of the benefit: preferably, the amount should be sufficient to buy a basket of quality, variable basic food items according to the size of the family; monitoring of families: families must be monitored, as cash transfers are not, in the absence of other measures, sufficient to overcome vulnerability. Monitoring families is necessary to identify different local and regional sources of vulnerability facing them. Advice on healthy food habits coupled to incentives to local food production is also necessary;
- complementary policies: these are fundamental to ensure that families will leave the program successfully, associated with measures to promote food and nutrition security for them. Through them, it is possible to generate jobs and income by stimulating local economies through incentives to local/regional food production, processing and marketing;
- definition of criteria for families to leave the program: these should be associated with better food standards in households as families acquire the autonomous capacity to generate income.

Concrete examples of complementary policies are the simultaneous expansion of: a) credit programs for small farmers, under subsidized conditions, such as the Pronaf – a specific credit program for family farmers providing different credit lines according to the annual income of the farmers, with the aim of promoting a more diversified, regionalized production; b) technical training and assistance programs for family farmers involving principles of diversification, conservation and appreciation for the local knowledge of farmers; c) a program for local food procurement from family farmers with the aim of improving market prices and distributing the food thus procured to institutional programs such as the school meal program and to hospitals and emergency programs; c) implementation of regional food marketing facilities and local farmers' open-air markets in areas with intense circulation of people and preferably on days on which the cash transfers are paid out; d) microcredit and solidarity economy programs, preferably integrated into solidarity-based marketing networks.

## PROSPECTS – INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY POLICY

Promoting a solid institutional framework for the Food Security Policy as a State policy is a key requirement for implementing it. At least three tools are necessary to promote this institutionalization process: a) a food security law to ensure the right to food as a duty of the State, define the policy tools and ensure its continuity even when governments change; b) an institutional design in the Executive Branch, with a framework, inter-sectoral coordination means, and funding sources; c) social control and participation mechanisms with tools to monitor and evaluate the policy and its programs.

Brazil has the following institutions in place: the Food and Nutrition Security Council (Consea) as a body directly in charge of advising the President of the Republic and developing links between civil society and the government; the passage of the Food and Nutrition Security Organic Law (Losan), designed to ensure the permanent and compulsory implementation of the National Food and Nutrition Security System (Sisan) defined within Consea; the Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Combat, which has a National Food Security Secretariat. It is now necessary to implement an inter-sectoral coordination mechanism, since food security actions are scattered in different ministries and budget resources are defined yearly as determined by budget stability requirements.

According to the Losan law, the Sisan system is to be made up of agencies of the Federal Government, states and municipalities and private institutions engaged in FNS-related actions which express an interest in joining the System, the purposes of which are to “draw up and implement food and nutrition security policies and plans, stimulate joint efforts between the government and civil society, and follow up on, monitor and evaluate food and nutrition security in Brazil.”

The Sisan is also made up of the following components: the National Conference on Food and Nutrition Security, which suggests guidelines and priorities for the National Food and Security Policy and Plan to Consea; Consea, a body directly in charge of advising the President of the Republic; and the Interministerial Chamber for Food and Nutrition Security, composed of ministers

and special secretaries responsible for agencies that address FNS-related matters, which is in charge of drawing up the National FNS Policy and Plan and of coordinating their implementation.

In the Executive Branch, the Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Combat has been the main interlocutor for FNDS-related matters within the government.

Consea operates as an advisory and liaison body linked to the Presidency of the Republic and not as a deliberative body linked to a sectoral ministry. This is so because Food Security is a multi-sectoral policy that should not be linked to one specific sector or ministry, or else its capacity to develop links with multiple sectors might be lost. The idea, then, is to set up an Interministerial Government Committee as a key interlocutor.

But what would be the best institutional model? For Latin American countries that have been discussing the need to adopt a Food Security Policy, the starting point is their concern with ensuring food supply and protecting their farmers. This is the case of Mexico, which is also discussing the establishment of a Food Security Organic Law. According to the draft of the *Ley de Planeación para la Soberanía y Seguridad Agroalimentaria y Nutricional*, of the Comisión de Agricultura y Ganadería do Palacio Legislativo, November 2005 version, “es urgente y prioritario el establecimiento de un marco jurídico que dé certidumbre a las políticas agropecuarias y agroalimentarias de México, como base de la soberanía y seguridad alimentaria y nutricional de la nación mexicana.”

The food security programs of Venezuela also have a strong food supply component. According to Llambí (2005), “el Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2001-2007 ratificó como objetivo prioritario de la política de seguridad alimentaria la autosuficiencia del país en relación a la oferta de alimentos, y centró su atención en la creación de reservas para una lista de productos definidos como sensibles.”

Therefore, it can be seen that the institutional framework of these countries must be strongly centralized in their respective ministries of Agriculture and Livestock. This is not the case in Brazil, since, as mentioned before, the problem of food supply for food security purposes in the country was solved in previous decades and today Brazil is one of the world’s main exporters of basic food items. Agricultural/livestock problems have been solved through the sectoral actions of the Ministry of Agriculture. For this reason,

Brazil's institutional proposal was different.

It was assessed that the advances achieved in implementing actions to strengthen food security were possible, in the first year, due to the existence of a specific sectoral ministry to draw up and implement policies that did not exist in the past with a budget of its own and the necessary autonomy to act more swiftly, despite shortcomings such as lack of sufficient staff, and to establish appropriate links in the process of implementing some other programs at the federal, state and municipal levels.

In the years that followed, it was seen that the features of the initial model were preserved. Maintaining specific policies was largely possible due to the model that was initially adopted, with R\$ 1.8 billion in available resources. In terms of resources, this represented all that was “new” in Food and Nutrition Security in the government. It is worth recalling how difficult it was for Consea to secure funds for FNS in the budget and to be allowed to execute them in 1993. Because the budget is somewhat inflexible (i.e. the budget for the following year for each ministry and for each program of each ministry is defined according to what was spent in the previous year), the establishment of Mesa made it possible to preserve the same funds in the budget in following years. The budget items related to the Food Card Program, which accounted for most funds earmarked for the Family Grant program (R\$ 50.00 to R\$ 63.00 per family in average), were incorporated into it and expanded. However, limitations were observed in terms of coordination with other ministries.

In this context, the existence of Consea was fundamental to uphold the governmental commitment to implement a Food and Nutrition Security Policy as a cross-cutting and strategic goal, albeit secondary, and also to keep pressing to ensure appropriate social control of social programs, particularly of the Family Grant program.

However, coordinating and implementing bodies in the Executive Branch is also necessary, since Consea, as a social representation and control body, cannot replace the role of the State. In this case, two institutional alternatives are being considered: the first one, provided for in the Losan law, is to have a non-sectoral agency ranking higher than the executing sectoral ministries as interlocutor and coordinator of the government's Food and Nutrition Security Policy. The Civil House would be agency that satisfies

these requirements, since its role is precisely that of coordinating governmental actions. Under this model, the need of a clear commitment to ensure food security as a priority goal of government is greatly enhanced, otherwise the risks of instability and slow decision-making become quite high. This alternative does not eliminate the need to have specific executing agencies within the MDS and the Ministry of Health, for example.

The question that this alternative does not answer is: what kind of links would be established between the food security policy and other social policies? Would it be subordinated to them or vice versa? The importance of this question lies in the fact that there is a gray area in terms of structural policies for overcoming vulnerabilities, which comprise the social area as a whole.

The institutional alternative to tackle this matter conceptually is to address the issue of access to quality food as a specific and permanent sectoral component of the government's social policy. This is justified by the need to deal with food as a social right, like the right to health, education, work and social assistance, thereby resuming and completing the notion of social security provided for in the Constitution of 1988. This means that, just like universal access to health care and education is ensured through the provision of appropriate services to the population, the food sector must also provide services to promote its access to quality food. The coordination issue would be tackled under the more comprehensive scope of the government's social security policy, where food security would be one of its cross-cutting goals. However, for this proposal to work, all ministers responsible for addressing social security issues must understand its complementary nature and act jointly based on agreements and in a non-competing fashion, which is a huge challenge when there are political disputes.

The task of formulating, implementing and monitoring specific food security and food policy actions in the broader sense could be assigned to a ministry, to a company such as the National Food Supply Company, or to an institute similar to the old Inan (National Institute for Food and Nutrition), always bearing in mind the interests and points of view of civil society as expressed within Consea.

For the government to act consistently with the priority attached to food and nutrition security it must: assume the position that fighting hunger is at the same time a structural and an emer-

gency action; develop interministerial links around food and nutrition security, clearly defining who will be in charge of coordinating it; and develop a clear proposal for its social policy, which is more comprehensive than a cash transfer program. It is also fundamental to resume and strengthen the discourse of the right to food, of the need to adopt structuring policies associated with emergency actions, and of ensuring social control as a means to expand citizenship rights, otherwise the risk of people agreeing with the criticism that social policies are being used for electioneering purposes only increases.

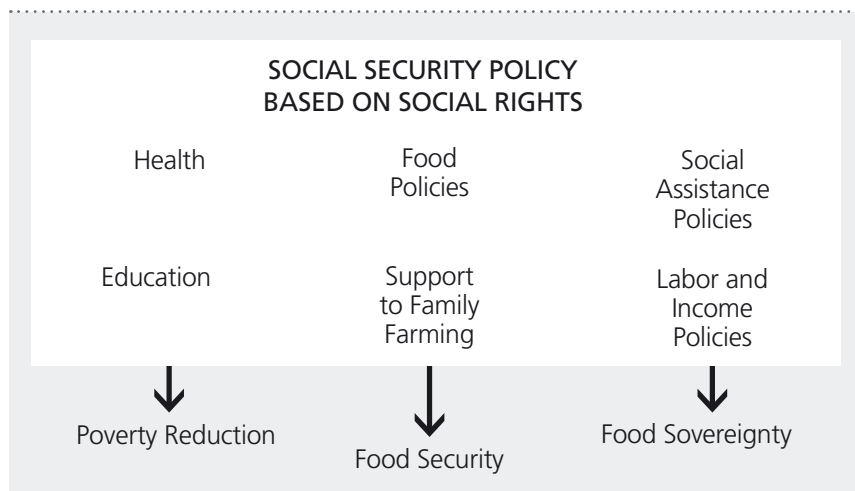
In relation to the definition of a social policy, Latin American countries are proposing approaches based on two conflicting assumptions: some of them advocate a policy focused on the poorest families in the population, with less spending with universal social policies, such as policies designed to promote universal social security, labor and health care rights, and allocation of budget resources to conditional cash transfer programs. In this case, poorly monitored actions to provide ways out of poverty to families are based on the notion that their way out of their condition of vulnerability depends on their individual choices: keeping their children at school with their health status regularly monitored by the health care system, making sure that they attend professional training courses, etc. Social control and participatory management are not supported as principles.

Other countries support the notion that all citizens should have access to sufficient, healthy and balanced food as a human right and a duty of the State. The supporters of this notion believe that vulnerability can only be eliminated through an economic development approach that ensures jobs and income and reduces social inequality combined with income distribution policies and universal policies intended to ensure rights and recover the purchasing power of the minimum wage. In addition, they believe that specific policies to ensure access to food should lead to positive developments in terms of local job and income generation, apart from strengthening citizenship rights and promoting greater participation of the population through local social control bodies. In the Brazilian case, this second model was the one that grew in strength most.

The combined outcome of this comprehensive social security policy should be focused, as priority goals, on reducing poverty and promoting food and nutrition security and food sovereignty. Cash transfers would be one of the possible tools to provide im-

mediate assistance to the poorest families in the population, which would be given priority by the government at large. That is, each policy, isolatedly, will not produce the desired results, and an income transfer scheme would not be an isolated program of a sector or area of the government. In this proposal, shown in the figure below, ways out are intrinsic elements of the design of the governmental social policy. While cash transfers can meet basic needs of poor families immediately, all the areas mentioned here converge to guarantee rights and means for them to overcome their condition of vulnerability. The proposal includes suggestions for joint changes in Brazil's income distribution framework.

#### **Brazil's Income Distribution Framework**



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## 8. FAMILY FARMING AND PRICE GUARANTEE PROGRAMS IN BRAZIL: THE FOOD ACQUISITION PROGRAM (PAA)<sup>1</sup>

*Adoniram Sanches Peraci  
Gilson Alceu Bittencourt*

### INTRODUCTION

Rural credit has always been the main tool of the Brazilian agricultural policy. Even back in the 1970s and 1980s, when significant resources were available for guaranteeing minimum prices and technical assistance, credit was the base of Brazil's agricultural modernization process.

Rural credit used to be selective and tended to concentrate the income, as a posture prevailed in the Brazilian government that "agriculture and farmers" should rely on agricultural policies regardless of their size, i.e. all farmers were treated in the same way, without talking into account their economic and social differences. As a result, medium-sized and large farmers ended up being the main beneficiaries, as they were in a better position to access rural credit lines and enjoy the benefits of minimum price policies.

Although they accounted for over 80% of all rural establishments and for a significant percentage of the agriculture/livestock production in Brazil, particularly of staple food items, family farmers were usually excluded from agricultural policies. This process began to change when the Pronaf was created, in 1995.

### PRONAF – NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF FAMILY FARMING

The Pronaf was an achievement of family farmers and their organizations and it can be defined as the first credit line specifically designed for family farming in Brazil. In 1994, after a lot pres-

1. Summary of a report presented to the FAO, June 2010.

sure from family farmers through social mobilizations organized by different social movements since 1992, particularly by the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (Contag) and the National Rural Workers' Department of the Single Workers' Union (DNTR-CUT), the Program for the Recovery of Small-scale Rural Production (Provap) was created. Between 1992 and 1996, although the list of claims of family farmers included technical assistance, infrastructure and environment- and technology-related matters, these topics ended up being relegated to secondary importance in the negotiations. The key point was their demand for differentiated rural credit lines and the arguments used by union leaders back then were the following ones: "how can we discuss technical assistance if we have no access to credit?"; "we cannot discuss diversification alternatives if we have no access to credit"; "the environment is important, but we need to have an income before we can discuss how to preserve it." Credit was thus the main focus of the large majority of mobilizations organized by family farmers.

In 1995, as a result of mobilizations organized by family farmers during the 2nd Grito da Terra Brasil<sup>2</sup>, the federal government created the Pronaf, which replaced the Provap, through a Resolution issued by the National Monetary Council (CMN). In that harvest, only working capital loans were granted. These were granted to farmers with an area smaller than four (4) fiscal modules who used family labor (but could hire third parties occasionally), with at least 80% of their family income coming from agriculture/livestock, and who lived in the farm or in a nearby rural or urban community.

In 1999, responsibility for the Pronaf was transferred from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (Mapa) to the then recently-created Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA). After the Special Credit Program for Agrarian Reform (Procera) was discontinued, new categories of beneficiaries were created. Family farmers were classified in four groups – A, B, C and D – based on their income and labor arrangements. A collective credit scheme for legal persons designed for associations and cooperatives was created. Non-agricultural activities, such as rural tourism and handcraft, and environment-related activities began to be financed.

2. National demonstration coordinated by Contag and DNTR/CUT with the participation of many other organizations that represented and supported family farmers. It was held annually in various states and in the federal capital and was used to negotiate and deliver a list of claims to state governments and the federal administration.

In 2003, with the change in government, the Pronaf was given more space and budget resources, and the federal administration began to see it as a priority program. That was the year in which the Family Agriculture Food Acquisition Program (PAA) was established with the aim of ensuring a monetary income to more decapitalized family farmers, of generating possibilities for marketing their products, and of creating a price guarantee tool for part of their produce.

In 2004, a new group of family farmers was included in the Pronaf (group E), consisting of better-off farmers who satisfied the program's criteria in terms of area, labor and family management but whose gross annual income exceeded the limit adopted by Pronaf then. In that same year, a specific insurance scheme for family farming, called *Proagro Mais*, was created. The *Proagro Mais* scheme, also known as Seaf – Family Farming Insurance System, is a multiple peril insurance scheme that covers a broad range of events, including excessive rain, frost, hail, drought, excessive temperature variations, strong winds, cold winds and fungal diseases or plagues for which no technically or economically feasible control methods are available. All crops contemplated in the Agricultural Zoning of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply can be covered by this insurance scheme. In 2003, these were eight crops, but now their number has increased to 35. All irrigated crops are also insurable. The Seaf contemplates specific features of family farming, including mixed crops, traditional, local or Creole cultivars (provided that they are registered with the MDA) and crop inputs of the farmers themselves. Currently, about 600,000 working capital loan contracts are being insured each year, ensuring about R\$ 5 billion in working capital financing to family farmers. The insured value amounts to 100 % of the financed working capital plus an income coverage equivalent to 65 % of the expected net revenue up to R\$ 2,500 per farmer/year. Farmers pay 2 % over the insured value. Subventions from the federal government amount to about 6 % of the insured value.

In 2006, Law n. 11,326, also known as the Family Farming Law, was passed. This law resulted from discussions held in different social forums and at the National Congress and it consolidated the concept of the family farming category, which used to be referred to as small-scale agriculture in the past. The law provides for concepts, principles and tools to be used in drawing up public poli-

cies for family farming and rural family undertakings and defines family farmers as those engaged in activities in rural areas who also satisfy the following requirements:

I – they do not have under any tenure regime an area larger than four (4) fiscal modules;

II – they predominantly rely on their own family labor in their establishment or undertaking;

III – their household income predominantly originates in the family establishment or undertaking;

IV – their establishment or undertaking is run by the family.

It also explicitly defines arboriculturists, members of *Quilombo* communities, aquiculturists, extractivists and fishermen as beneficiaries.

In 2007, the Family Farming Price Guarantee Program (PG-PAF) was created as a tool through which the government ensures a minimum or reference price to family farmers through discounts in the value of financings provided under the Pronaf when market prices are below the reference price for a certain product during a working capital or investment loan pay-off period.

In 2008, a new investment credit line was created, called *Pronaf Mais Alimentos*, which provides loans of up R\$ 100,000 per family farmer at 2 %/year interest and a repayment period of up to 10 years. In that same year, groups C, D and E of Pronaf were all blended into a new group called Family Farmer. Group A (farmers settled under the agrarian reform program) was preserved. Credit for Group B of Pronaf (rural poor) began to be granted according to a rural microcredit methodology (involving credit agents).

In 2009, a new law was passed that will allow for the technical assistance available to family farmers to be significantly expanded.

Currently, to be a beneficiary of the Pronaf, a farmer must satisfy the criteria provided for in Law n. 11,326 of 2006 and his or her annual gross household income must not exceed R\$ 110,000. Once defined as beneficiaries of the Pronaf, family farmers are classified in three groups – A, B and Other Family Farmers. Group A is made up of farmers settled under the Agrarian Reform Program (PNRA) and by the Land and Agrarian Reform Fund. The two remaining groups are divided according to their annual gross income and family labor share in their establishments.

### Box 1 – Criteria for defining the beneficiaries of the Pronaf by group - 2009-2010

| PRONAF CREDIT - Classification of Family Farmers                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Group A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Group B                                                                                                                                  | Other Family Farmers                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Farmers settled under the National Agrarian Reform Program (PNRA) and by the Land and Agrarian Reform Fund, provided that they have not entered into an investment loan contract at the individual limit allowed by Proceara and Pronaf A. | Owners, squatters and leaseholders or partners                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Includes members of <i>Quilombo</i> and indigenous communities                                                                           | Includes concession holders under the PNRA and the Land Fund who are not beneficiaries of Group A any longer                                                                                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Live in the establishment or nearby                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Do not have under any tenure regime an area of more than 4 fiscal modules                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Their household income originates in agricultural/livestock and non-agricultural/livestock activities carried out in their establishment | At least 70% of their family income originates in agricultural/livestock or non-agricultural/livestock activities carried out in their establishment                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Family labor is the basic form of labor in their establishment                                                                           | Family labor is predominantly used in their establishment, but they might have up to two permanent employees. Occasional help from third parties is allowed as required by the seasonal nature of the activity |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Gross family income of up to R\$ 6,000/year                                                                                              | Gross annual family income of more than R\$ 6,000 and up to R\$ 110,000/year                                                                                                                                   |

#### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The calculation of gross income excluded social security benefits for rural activities.

For Pronaf coverage, the gross income from various livestock-related activities of greater added value can be deducted by up to 90%.

Non-agricultural/livestock services, activities and income include rural tourism, handicraft, family agribusiness and provision of services in rural areas which are consistent with rural undertakings and with better use of family labor.

The beneficiaries of the Pronaf must confirm their status of family farmers and that they fall under one of the program's groups through a Statement of Entitlement to the Pronaf (DAP). The DAP form is filled out and signed by a registered technical agent<sup>3</sup> authorized to do so by the Family Agriculture Secretariat (SAF/MDA) and by the organization that represents the beneficiaries, as well as by the farmers themselves. The DAP form is provided for the producing family unit as a whole, comprising all members who live in the same residence and/or explore the same areas.

Between 1995 and 2010, the limits imposed on loans provided by Pronaf per farmer were expanded, interest rates were reduced, resources available increased (from R\$ 2.4 billion in the 2002-2003 harvest to R\$ 17 billion for the 2009-2010 harvest), and the number of farmers who were granted loans grew, hitting the

3. The Family Agriculture Secretariat (SAF) registers technical assistance agencies such as Emater, Land Institutes, State Superintendencies of Incra, State Land Credit Units, Ceplac and others.

mark of about 2.2 million farmers in 2010. In addition, various other special credit lines were created for young people, women, organic crops, working capital and shares in cooperatives, agriindustrial projects and rural tourism, environmental recovery, semi-arid region, etc.

The Pronaf was a great achievement for family farmers, as it made it possible to expand agricultural policies for this group and to promote a shift from the mere provision of rural credit to a scheme that includes marketing support, price, climate and income insurance, and technical assistance. In addition, it contributed to promote society's recognition of the importance of family farming in generating work and income.

The constant changes and improvements experienced by the program since it was launched as a result of the social interaction with its target audience and its organizations contributed to expand its scope of action and to adapt it to the specific features of family farming.

The advances brought about by Pronaf and its differences in relation to other programs in Latin America include the separation of farmers into groups according to their economic status; subsidized interest rates in financings; incentives to organic and agroecological projects; support to activities that generate more income; incentives to the establishment of small agriindustrial projects; support to training for young farmers; support to forestry development for environmental and economic purposes through the *Pronaf Florestal* credit line; simplification of credit guarantees; more democratic access to training through the selection of and support to projects developed by farmers' organizations; incentives and support to the establishment of cooperative credit systems; price and production insurance and, more recently, technical assistance.

### THE LULA ADMINISTRATION, THE ZERO HUNGER PROGRAM AND THE ORIGIN OF THE FOOD ACQUISITION PROGRAM (PAA)

In 2003, in the early stages of the Lula administration, technical experts from the then Extraordinary Ministry for Food Security (Mesa) and from the MDA shared the perception that price guarantee tools were not appropriately adjusted to the reality of

family farmers. According to them, the Minimum Price Guarantee Policy (PGPM) was not meeting the needs of poor family farmers because they lived at far distances from where the National Food Supply Company usually procured food or because the scale of their production was too small, making it difficult for the policy to be applied through conventional price guarantee tools.

It should be stressed that some of these problems were being eliminated in the 1970s and 1980s, when direct food procurement from small farmers was carried out by employees of the now extinct Production Financing Committee (CFP) and Banco do Brasil, who went to the production sites and set up Mobile Procurement Units (Povoc) there for this purpose, but their operational costs turned out to be too high for the government.

On the other hand, the Zero Hunger Program, the locomotive of governmental actions against hunger, proposed incentives for poor family farmers to step up their food production both for their own consumption and for selling their produce and generating more income for them. It was seen that many family farmers, particularly the poorest ones, had no incentives to increase their food production because they could not sell their products at prices that covered their costs and generated profit, especially because they had to rely on middlemen to sell them. This process led to a vicious circle, as the more difficult it was to sell their products and generate income, the less food was grown for their own consumption.

Free market rules in a context of high property concentration and imperfect or non-existent markets invariably lead to the marginalization of undertakings which, exposed to non-mediated competition with large-scale ones, create a very difficult scenario for thousands of farmers to compete on the market.

This realization led to the creation of the Family Agriculture Food Acquisition Program (PAA) with the following objectives:

I – encouraging poor family farmers to grow food, thus contributing to their food security;

II – generating income for poor family farmers by selling their surplus food production to the federal government;

III – encouraging the creation or development of marketing channels for family farming products in communities where they were weak or non-existent;

IV – increasing stocks of food items to be distributed to food programs with the aim of ensuring populations facing food and nutrition insecurity regular access to quality food in sufficient quantity;

V – fostering social inclusion in rural areas by strengthening family farming.

### THE PAA'S LEGAL BASIS

The PAA was institutionalized by Law n. 10,696 of 2003, through the inclusion of a single article in a bill under discussion at the National Congress, which reads as follows:

Art. 19. The Food Acquisition Program is hereby established with the aim of encouraging family farming, and it shall comprise actions for distributing agricultural/livestock products to people facing food insecurity and for establishing strategic stocks.

§ 1º - The funds collected as a result of the sale of strategic stocks established according to the provisions of this article shall be fully earmarked for actions against hunger and for promoting food security.

§ 2º - The Program referred to in the caption of this article shall be intended to procure agricultural/livestock products produced by family farmers registered with the National Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming – Pronaf without the need of any tender, provided that their prices are not higher those charged in regional markets.

§ 3º - The Executive Branch shall set up a Managing Group made up of representatives of the ministries of Land Development; of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply; of Finance; of Planning, Budget and Management; and of the Cabinet of the Extraordinary Minister of Food Security and Hunger Combat Program to implement the Program referred to in the caption.

§ 4º - The procurement of products as provided for in the caption of this article shall only be carried out within the limits imposed by the availability of budget and financial resources.

This article provided the legal basis for the direct procurement of food products from family farmers without the need of tenders, apart from ensuring fairer prices to these farmers, in tune with those

charged in the local market. The PAA could therefore complement the actions of food and nutrition security policies and consolidate itself as a key element for structuring institutional demands for family farming products. As a result, it contributed to ensure an income to family farmers while improving access to food for people facing social vulnerability or food insecurity. Hunger and food and nutrition insecurity are still major problems in Brazil and family farming has a key role to play in contributing to eradicate this scourge.

In 2009, Law n. 11,947, of June 16, provided that a minimum percentage of 30 % of the funds of the National Education Development Fund (FNDE) transferred to municipalities under the National School Meal Program (Pnae) were to be earmarked for procuring food products from family farmers, significantly expanding the PAA's institutional market. Once this law was passed, the Ministry of Education began to take part in the PAA's Managing Group. For this purpose, paragraph 3 of article 19 of Law n. 10,696 of 2003 was amended to read as follows:

§ 3º - The Executive Branch shall set up a Managing Group made up of representatives of the ministries of Land Development; of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply; of Finance; of Planning, Budget and Management; of Social Development and Hunger Combat; and of Education to implement the Program referred to in the caption of this article.

The PAA was regulated through Decree n. 4,772 of July 2, 2003, which was revoked in 2006 by Decree n. 5,873, which in turn was revoked by Decree n. 6,447 of 2008, that was partially amended by Decree n. 6,959 of September 15, 2009.

To meet the needs of particularly poor family farmers as a priority, the decree of 2003 set the maximum amount for procurement per farmer/year at R\$ 2,500.00, which was equivalent to about 10 minimum wages then, meaning that even if the production of a family farmer exceeded that amount, procurement per farmer under the program was limited to that amount.

In 2008, through Decree n. 6,447, the maximum amounts for procuring food from each family farmer under the PAA were expanded, and differentiated limits were also established for each of the program's modalities. This decree also determined that the Ministry of Education (MEC) would be another member of the PAA Managing Group.

The initial focus of the program was on the direct procurement of food items such as rice, beans, manioc flour, corn, wheat, cashew nut, Brazil nut, sorghum and whole milk powder to establish stocks or to be donated by the Extraordinary Ministry of Food Security and Hunger Combat. Later, in partnership with state governments, the program began to buy milk from family farmers and distribute it to poor communities in Brazil's northeast region under a modality called *PAA Leite* (PAA milk).

Within the federal public administration, the PAA is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development, where most resources allocated to it are concentrated. In 2006, the Ministry of Agrarian Development launched a complementary action aimed at facilitating the establishment of food stocks by family farmers' cooperatives or associations, strengthening local food security strategies and networks. To ensure the implementation of the PAA program, the MDS enters into funding agreements for this purpose with the National Food Supply Company (Conab), state and municipal governments, and the MDA transfers funds to Conab exclusively.

### THE PAA MANAGING GROUP AND ITS COMPETENCY

The PAA Managing Group, which is coordinated by the Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Combat (MDS) and includes representatives of the Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management (MPOG), of the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA), of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (Mapa), of the Ministry of Finance (MF), and of Ministry of Education (MEC), is in charge of implementing the program, whose guidelines are established and published in resolutions. The PAA Managing Group is responsible for defining:

I – the modalities of procurement of agricultural/livestock products to set up strategic stocks to be distributed to people facing food insecurity and to be used by the school meal program;

II – reference prices for procuring agricultural/livestock products, taking into account regional differences and the reality of family farming;

III – priority regions for implementing the Food Acquisition Program;

IV – conditions for donating the procured products to eligible beneficiaries in the situations contemplated in Complementary Law n. 111 of 2001 or in the National Food Access Program;

V – conditions for setting up public stocks under the Food Acquisition Program;

VI – conditions for selling food products acquired according to the provisions of Decree n. 6,447/2008;

VII – conditions for supporting the establishment of food stocks by family farmers' organizations; and VIII – other necessary measures for implementing the Food Acquisition Program.

The program procures food products with waiver of tender<sup>4</sup> at reference prices that cannot be higher or lower than those charged in regional markets, up to the annual limits set by Decree n. 6,447 per family farmer meeting the criteria provided for in Law n. 10,696 of July 24, 2006 and by the National Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming (Pronaf), except in the Incentive to Milk Production and Consumption modality, whose limit is set at six-month intervals.

The food acquired by the program is mainly intended to assist people facing food and nutrition insecurity covered by local social programs and other citizens at food risk, including indigenous people, members of *Quilombo* communities, people camped while waiting to be settled under the agrarian reform program and people affected by dams.

The Managing Group holds ordinary meetings at four-month intervals and meets extraordinarily whenever necessary.

## PAA OPERATION MODALITIES

### *Direct Food Procurement from Family Farmers* (Compra Direta da Agricultura Familiar - CDAF)

This is the modality under which the federal government buys food products from farmers organized in formal groups (formal and informal cooperatives and associations) at reference prices set by the program's Managing Group through direct procurement.

4. In its article 3, Law n. 8,666 of June 21, 1993 reads as follows: "Tenders are designed to ensure the observance of the constitutional principle of isonomy and the selection of the *most advantageous proposal for the Public Administration* [...]". However, that Law provides for some exceptions in which, although competition might be involved, carrying out a formal tender process could be inconvenient for the public interest, such as in the procurement of food items from family farmers to be distributed to population segments facing food insecurity.

The CDAF modality is operationalized by the National Food Supply Company with funds made available by the MDS and MDA under agreements for this purpose. The main items bought under this modality are rice, cashew nut, Brazil nut, manioc flour, beans, corn, sorghum, wheat, whole milk powder, wheat flour and others.

This modality can also be used for recovering prices paid to farmers through stock operations, adjusting the availability of products to consumption needs, thereby playing an important role in regulating prices. Products acquired under this PAA modality can also be used to prepare food baskets to be distributed under certain social programs.

To be acquired by the federal government, *in natura* products must be clean, dry, and meet the identity and quality criteria established by Mapa. If a product is processed, it should be packed according to the standards set by the competent agencies and delivered in fixed purchasing facilities (Storage Sites of the National Food Supply Company or registered by it) or in mobile purchasing facilities (in locations not provided with a storage facility).

Of all funds earmarked for the program in 2009, R\$ 166.2 million were applied to the direct procurement modality, through which food items grown by family farmers were bought from their organizations, particularly cooperatives meeting the criteria established by the PAA. Through the direct procurement modality, food items grown by 42,837 thousand farmers in over 302 municipalities were bought in that year, representing an average purchase of R\$ 4,000 per family farmer. The MDS participated in this modality with R\$ 109 million and the MDA participated with more R\$ 57.2 million.

Special mention should be made of the fact that this PAA modality made it possible to guarantee prices to milk producers, particularly in the south, where milk powder was bought in an action to control prices and set up public stocks. Under this modality, 61.5% of the funds were spent in the South Region, benefiting 58% of its farmers, particularly the state of Rio Grande do Sul, where 45.8% of all funds were applied. In the northeast region, products were bought from 12,187 farmers through this modality, involving a total sum of R\$ 46 million.

Notwithstanding the important role played by the PAA in guaranteeing prices for family milk producers, who faced many

surplus problems recently, it was seen that the program tended to concentrate its actions in Brazil's south region, where the economic participation of family farmers is particularly strong, and that a better diagnosis and more effective links with family farmers' organizations were necessary in other regions, particularly in the north.

*Direct Local Food Procurement from Family Farmers for Simultaneous Donation (Compra Direta Local da Agricultura Familiar para Doação Simultânea - CDL)*

The CDL program was designed to foster links between the production of family farmers and local demands for food and nutritional supplementation in schools, day-care centers, shelters, shelter homes, public hospitals and local social programs such as food banks, subsidized restaurants and community kitchens. This modality is also intended to promote the development of the local economy, to strengthen family farming and to generate work and income in rural areas.

The mechanism used by the MDS to implement the CDL Program is that of entering into fund-transfer agreements with state and municipal governments or with the National Food Supply Company for them to take on the responsibility for operationalizing the program, with the aim of ensuring the feasibility of its fundamental results and full implementation.

Organizations that supply meals registered with the Food Banks to assist families or individuals facing social vulnerability and/or food and nutrition insecurity are the intermediate beneficiaries of the program. It also supports social programs aimed at ensuring access to food, such as subsidized restaurants and community kitchens and programs under which meals are served in schools, day-care centers, shelter homes and public hospitals. Priority is to be given to family farmers in the procurement of food products in the following order: family farmers in *Quilombo*, indigenous and riverine communities, camped landless rural workers and traditional family farmers.

To be entitled to receive food products, the farmers' organizations must prepare a proposal associating the food consumption needs of the audience assisted by it with the possibility of family farmers in the region supplying these needs. The proposal must include a list of the farmers in question, sale prices, the total amount

of the purchase, and the location for delivering the products. All the proposals for participation must be submitted to a local Food Security Council and Nutritional (local Consea) for approval or, if it is not available, to an active local council directly involved in the execution of the agreement from its approval to monitoring and social control.

After its proposal for participation is approved, a farmers' organization begins to deliver its products according to a schedule agreed upon beforehand and the respective payment is deposited in a current account upon confirmation (Term of Receipt and Acceptance) that the products were actually delivered with the quality and in the quantity agreed upon.

Within Conab, the proposal is formalized through a Farm Product Bond (*Cédula de Produto Rural* - CPR) which is issued upon the submission of a participation application by family farmers organized in formal groups (cooperatives and associations), who take on the commitment to deliver food products to governmental or non-governmental institutions engaged in publicly recognized activities to assist populations at food and nutritional risk.

Municipalities not included in an area covered by agreements between the MDS and a state government and municipalities where the National Food Supply Company does not operate can enter into a direct agreement with the MDS. Every year, the MDS announces processes for selecting municipalities interested in implementing the Purchase for Simultaneous Donation modality of the program.

The main innovation of this modality is the public intermediation of different foodstuffs, including sweets, jellies, cakes, vegetables, without any stocking involved and only for the purpose of facilitating the relationship between family farmers and consumer networks, that is, only with the aim of strengthening local food networks and enriching the regional diet.

For implementing this modality, funds are released by the MDS through agreements entered into between this ministry and three types of executors: the National Food Supply Company, municipalities and states. In 2009, funds earmarked for food procurement under this modality amounted to R\$ 202.1 million, of which R\$ 150.3 million were released through Conab, R\$ 27.1 million through state governments and R\$ 24.6 million through municipi-

pal governments. 34.2% of all funds earmarked for the PAA in 2009 were spent with this modality, allowing for the purchase of the produce of 65,000 family farmers. It should be highlighted that funds earmarked for agreements between municipalities and states reached 670 municipalities altogether in 2009, while Conab implemented the program in 326 other municipalities.

Considering that the objective of this modality is to promote closer links between local food production and consumption, special mention should be made of the amount of funds allocated to Brazil's northeast region and to the north region of Minas Gerais, which accounted for 50% of all funds allocated to operations carried out through the National Food Supply Company, states and municipalities.

In terms of food supplementation, this modality concentrated the largest number of people assisted by the program in 2009, i.e. 9.8 million people with access to food items grown by family farmers. Approximately 144.6 thousand tons of food products were purchased for different purposes and transferred to organizations involved in the program's actions duly accompanied by purchase and distribution control documents.

It should be highlighted that 50% of all the food supplies allocated to the Program for Food Distribution to Specific Population Groups, implemented by the MDS with the aim of distributing food to audiences such as *Quilombo* communities, families in camps while waiting to be settled under the agrarian reform program, and municipalities affected by a public calamity, which cannot produce or buy food, were ensured by food purchased to be simultaneously donated, according to information provided by the MDS.

Besides its confirmed potential to be executed under the PAA, as confirmed by the figures of its implementation, this modality expresses the most challenging purposes of all the program's modalities, as it requires the establishment of a complex and comprehensive network and involves elements that, considering their local repercussions, allow for the integration of a set of actions into a sustainable development proposal.

#### ***Stocks set up by Family Farmers (Formação de Estoque pela Agricultura Familiar - CPR Estoque)***

The objective of this modality is to finance stocks of products of the current harvest of family farmers organized in formal groups.

The stocks are set up by the farmers' organizations themselves, strengthening food security systems and networks and keeping the food products in their localities, apart from allowing for them to be sold in periods in which prices are more rewarding for farmers.

The *CPR Estoque* modality was created in 2006 and was exclusively financed by the MDA before it began to rely on funds from the MDS as well. It is operationalized by the National Food Supply Company through fund transfers and implemented through family farmers' organizations (cooperatives, associations, family-based agriindustries, consortia or rural condominiums) with at least 70 % of their members/affiliates covered by the Pronaf. This modality of support to the establishment of private stocks makes funds available through the issue of a Farm Product Bond (*CPR Estoque*) for these groups to buy the produce of family farmers and set up stocks of products to be marketed in the future under more favorable conditions as a result of either processing and adding value to a product or of making it available at more favorable moments in terms of prices. The limit imposed on funds per organization is R\$ 1.5 million/year, defined according to the number of family farmers benefitting from the sale of their production.

With its members, the farmer's organization identifies the possibility of setting up a stock of a certain product and submits an application for participation in the modality to the Regional Superintendence of the closest branch of the National Food Supply Company in the region. This application for participation defines the product to be stocked, the deadline for the stock to be set up, the products that will be purchased, their respective prices, and which family farmers will be the beneficiaries. It must also mention that the product will be used as a guarantee.

Once the application for participation is approved, the organization issues a *CPR Estoque* bond and the National Food Supply Company makes funds available for the organization to begin the process of buying food from the family farmers listed in the application. The maturity date of the *CPR Estoque* bond is defined according to the product in question, but in no case it is longer than 12 months. At the end of the Bond's maturity date, the organization must pay off the *CPR Estoque* bond, which is defined by the amount received plus 3 % a year, calculated from the bond's date of issue to the date of its liquidation.

The CPR can be paid off in products when this arrangement is within the interest of the public administration. In this case, this possibility must be mentioned in the Bond.

In 2009, this modality involved an investment of R\$ 46 million in 16 states, particularly in the south region (49%) and wheat and milk powder were the main products purchased. However, as opposed to Direct Procurement, this PAA modality was better distributed throughout the national territory, encouraging family farmers to set up private stocks of a broad range of products, such as Brazil nut, sugar, honey, fruit pulp, manioc flour, meat, fish, coffee, cheese, rice, guarana, cabbage palm, beans, wheat, corn, and milk powder, among others. As a result, this modality made it possible for stocks of these products to be set up and to interfere in their prices to a certain extent, particularly during harvest periods, ensuring greater autonomy to family farmers and better prices for them by eliminating the figure of the middleman.

As in the Direct Procurement modality, the important role played by family farmers' organizations in setting up stocks could be clearly perceived. In 2009, funds linked to this modality of the program were transferred to 192 farmers' organizations, involving 11,135 family farmers. The MDA allocated R\$ 32.4 million and the MDS allocated another R\$ 14 million to this PAA modality in 2009, totaling R\$ 46.4 million, which made it possible to finance a total stock of 52,000 tons of different products.

### *Incentives to Milk Production and Consumption*

#### **(Incentivo à Produção e ao Consumo do Leite - PL)**

The objective of this modality is to contribute toward increasing the consumption of milk by families facing food and nutrition insecurity and to stimulate family-based milk production schemes. It is implemented through agreements between the MDS and state governments in the northeast region – the governments of the states of Alagoas, Bahia, Ceará, Maranhão, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte and Sergipe – and Minas Gerais. It should be mentioned that Brazil's northeast region is the country's poorest region.

Therefore, this modality was conceived to benefit two groups: family farmers, who benefit by selling the milk they produce, and the low-income population, to which milk is distributed free of charge.

For a low-income family to be eligible to receive this milk it must have a per capita income of up to half a minimum wage and its members must include:

- I – children aged up to six years old;
- II – mothers breastfeeding their children until the age of 6 months;
- III – pregnant women as confirmed by a health station;
- IV – elderly people above 60 years old;
- V – other members, provided that they are authorized to be assisted by the program by the State Food and Nutrition Security Council.

For family farmers to be covered by the program and to have the assurance that their production will be bought at a fixed price, the requirements are the following:

- I – they must produce 100 liters of milk/day at most, and priority is given to those who produce 30 liters/day in average;
- II – they must respect the maximum financial benefit of R\$ 4,000 per producer granted at six-month intervals;
- III – they must have a DAP – Statement of Entitlement to the Pronaf;

- IV – they must confirm that their animals are duly immunized.

The historical records of this program show that funds earmarked for milk procurement and distribution have stabilized in recent years. R\$ 175.4 million were spent in 2009 in operations jointly carried out between the MDS and state governments under agreements, plus R\$ 33.3 million invested by states as their counterpart. Therefore, the sum allocated to the milk program in 2009 totaled R\$ 208.7 million, which were invested in the procurement of in natura items and in their processing and distribution to the program's end beneficiaries.

Approximately 59% of the funds invested in the *PAA Leite* modality of the program were earmarked for procuring milk from family farmers or their organizations, cooperatives or informal groups. The rest was allocated to processing, pasteurizing and packaging the product. (See *Tables 1 and 2*)

The number of families covered by the *PAA Leite* modality is also significant. On the side of family farmers, 24,000 milk producers in 9 states participated by selling their produce. Consuming families totaled 662,000, thus benefiting about 3.3 million people.

**Table 1 – Funds applied by unit of the Federation between 2003 and 2009 – In R\$ PAA Leite – Funds applied by the MDS – Historical series**

| Unit of the Federation       | 2003              | 2004              | 2005               | 2006               | 2007               | 2008               | 2009               |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| State of Alagoas             | 6,840,000         | 2,954,880         | 16,963,874         | 18,147,200         | 15,664,800         | 15,433,856         | 17,830,445         |
| State of Bahia               | 6,321,428         | 4,000,000         | 13,100,000         | 18,160,000         | 14,426,759         | 10,842,095         | 13,280,000         |
| State of Ceará               | 6,942,200         | 5,392,064         | 9,678,331          | 20,438,461         | 14,702,195         | 18,290,465         | 22,729,857         |
| State of Maranhão            | 6,378,111         | 0.0               | 0.0                | 12,094,320         | 11,054,177         | 11,810,754         | 10,580,312         |
| State of Minas Gerais        | 6,727,500         | 15,054,250        | 46,730,443         | 44,600,600         | 42,210,541         | 43,554,477         | 36,300,300         |
| State of Paraíba             | 8,018,222         | 10,825,658        | 49,692,400         | 40,189,213         | 39,303,893         | 40,509,318         | 37,826,355         |
| State of Pernambuco          | 7,340,587         | 9,872,470         | 16,211,332         | 28,049,060         | 24,163,320         | 23,808,406         | 24,842,060         |
| State of Piauí               | 2,364,000         | 2,587,200         | 12,407,733         | 8,865,457          | 9,644,100          | 1,928,820          | 2,366,167          |
| State of Rio Grande do Norte | 6,861,222         | 9,600,108         | 16,107,394         | 0.00               | 0.00               | 0.00               | 0.00               |
| State of Sergipe             | 4,094,571         | 1,000,000         | 9,782,393          | 11,264,120         | 7,972,480          | 9,485,200          | 9,604,000          |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>           | <b>61,887,841</b> | <b>61,286,630</b> | <b>190,673,900</b> | <b>201,808,432</b> | <b>179,142,266</b> | <b>175,663,394</b> | <b>175,359,496</b> |

Source: MDS

**Table 2 –Execution of the PAA Leite – 2009**

| Unit of the Federation | N. of municipalities | Value of the acquisitions (R\$) | N. of family farmers | N. of assisted families | Amount of milk / (L)  |
|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| State of Alagoas       | 101                  | 17,830,445                      | 2,791                | 53,500                  | 18,718,140.70         |
| State of Bahia         | 25                   | 13,280,000                      | 2,136                | 104,520                 | 17,093,204.00         |
| State of Ceará         | 148                  | 22,729,857                      | 1,924                | 56,277                  | 15,878,500.00         |
| State of Maranhão      | 85                   | 10,580,312                      | 1,317                | 46,000                  | 7,663,614.67          |
| State of Minas Gerais  | 202                  | 36,300,300                      | 5,410                | 151,500                 | 45,341,966.55         |
| State of Paraíba       | 224                  | 37,826,355                      | 5,043                | 120,168                 | 28,501,790.00         |
| State of Pernambuco    | 158                  | 24,842,060                      | 4,282                | 92,500                  | 32,455,856.00         |
| State of Piauí         | 100                  | 2,366,167                       | -                    | 8,000                   | -                     |
| State of Sergipe       | 35                   | 9,604,000                       | 1,055                | 30,000                  | 8,644,774.56          |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>     | <b>1,078</b>         | <b>175,359,496</b>              | <b>23,958</b>        | <b>662,465</b>          | <b>174,297,846.48</b> |

Source: MDS

*Advance Procurement (Compra Antecipada)*

Still in 2003, when the PAA was created, the National Food Supply Company and the MDA saw that a significant number of family farmers had no means to buy seeds to grow crops and that, therefore, they would not be able to produce anything. Some of

these farmers, particularly the poorest ones, had never been granted any rural credit before. These farmers did not know how the rural credit system worked, had no guarantees, or had no banking history that would allow them to access a rural credit line, even under the simplified procedures of the Pronaf. However, the other family farmers who had no funds to grow crops were farmers settled under the agrarian reform program who had access to rural credit already but were in default with the financial institutions, which prevented them from being granted new loans.

To try and support these farmers, the National Food Supply Company proposed a new food procurement modality called PAA Advance Procurement or PAA Farm Product Bond or CPR Food. This tool allows Conab to pay farmers in advance, in the sowing season, for food products (R\$ 2,500.00 by producer/year) upon their commitment to deliver the products in the purchased quantity in the harvest season. Farmers who prefer not to settle their CPR/PAA in products can pay it off in cash.

In a short time, Conab and farmers and their organizations began to see this PAA procurement modality as the best of all modalities, as it gives farmers access to funds without any banking red tape, without interest rates, without the rigidity and control of banks and, particularly, without checking their debt records. They expected this tool to put an end to or at least reduce the need for using the banking system to operate Pronaf credit lines, thus reducing government expenses with bank rates. They saw this modality as the “redemption of rural credit for family farming” without any financial intermediation of banks and using an institution that keeps close relations with farmers to grant them credit.

The total amount of funds used in loans granted under the CPR Food modality amounted to R\$ 92.3 million in 2003 and 2004, involving 47,215 families. While the loans were being granted, the tool was positively evaluated. However, upon the maturity of the operations in 2004 and 2005, the result was a failure. The methodology that was adopted, compounded by climatic problems, led to a default rate of over 70 %, much higher than the 2 % rate observed in the other credit lines made available by Pronaf with bank risk. This default rate led this PAA modality to be discontinued in 2005.

A more detailed analysis of operations carried out using this tool shows that most loans were not granted to poor farmers who had never had access to rural credit before, but rather to farmers settled under the agrarian reform program who had taken rural loans from financial institutions before and were in default with investment or working capital loans earmarked for them (Pronaf A or Pronaf A/C). For these farmers, who were classified as “in default” on credit records, including in the Cadin (Register of Defaulters with the Federal Administration), the inclusion of an additional operation would not affect their status as defaulters, as they were not allowed to get credit from federal public banks, the main operators of the Pronaf. That is, most family farmers who were granted credit under the CPR Food modality and became in default with the program were already in default with the rural credit facility, but because the loans were granted without checking the register of defaulters, the operations had been authorized.

It should also be stressed that the operational cost charged by the National Food Supply Company for these operations was similar to the cost charged by Banco do Brasil for operating the *Pronaf custeio* (working capital) credit line, even with the latter assuming the risk of the operations. In the case of the CPR Food modality, because the risk of the operation was fully assumed by the government, default was also converted into a cost of the program, rendering the operation even more inefficient economically.

Some lessons can be learned from the credit operations carried out under the PAA Advance Procurement modality in relation to its operationalization or even in relation to the design of this credit tool, with emphasis on:

- the mistaken priority given by the National Food Supply Company to using the advance procurement tool with farmers who were already in default with the rural credit facility, instead of giving priority to farmers who had never had access to credit or were facing difficulties to get loans from the Pronaf because of their little or no knowledge of how financial institutions operate;
- the fact that the National Food Supply Company did not check the register of defaulters with the rural credit facility. Not all those included in the list of defaulters are “bad

payers,” as people can become in default with a credit operation for different reasons. It is not necessary to block their access to credit, as in many cases only access to a new credit line will enable a borrower to pay off his or her debt. However, analyzing the operation in question and the reasons that might have led a farmer to default on a loan is fundamental for granting new loans.

The credit system should be operated by a financial institution specializing in credit operations, such as a bank or credit cooperative. If this institution is a non-governmental organization set up as an Oscip – Civil-Society Public-Interest Organization, it should also specialize in credit operations. Specialized credit institutions which farmers see as financial institutions (whether regulated by the Central Bank or not) tend to take credit operations more seriously and to apply stricter controls for granting credit, holding borrowers responsible for their debt as well. Therefore, the government should act to bring excluded people to the financial system, and not the other way around. Their inclusion in the financial system can be directly ensured through banks and credit cooperatives or indirectly through microfinance organizations or even banking correspondents.

Financial inclusion and, consequently, access to credit tend to be more easily massified with the effective participation of regulated financial institutions, which apart from credit can provide other financial services which are necessary to promote the economic development of a sector or community, such as savings accounts, insurance services, current accounts, etc. Out of this circuit, credit operations are usually experimental and small in scale.

#### **APPLICATION BY MODALITY AND UNIT OF THE FEDERATION – 2009**

In 2009, the PAA relied on a budget of R\$ 590 million and bought food products from 142.9 thousand family farmers, totaling 458 thousand tons of products that were distributed to over 10.5 million families. It also financed the stocking of an additional 52 thousand tons of food products by family farmers’ organizations, ensuring better prices to them.

**Table 3 – PAA – Funds applied by operation modality – 2009**

| Modality               | N. of municipalities | Value of purchases (R\$) |               | Family farmers |               | Families covered  | Quantity       |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|
|                        |                      | R\$                      | %             | N.             | %             | N.                | Tons           |
| Direct Procurement     | 302                  | 166,258,653              | 28.2%         | 42,837         | 30.0%         |                   | 139,183        |
| Purchase with Donation | 996                  | 202,248,440              | 34.3%         | 65,055         | 45.5%         | 9,904,170         | 145,367        |
| State Governments      | 604                  | 27,119,350               | 4.6%          | 12,462         | 8.7%          | 1,429,889         | 12,023         |
| Municipal Governments  | 66                   | 24,652,802               | 4.2%          | 7,962          | 5.6%          | 477,435           | 37,597         |
| Conab                  | 326                  | 150,476,289              | 25.5%         | 44,631         | 31.2%         | 7,996,846         | 95,747         |
| Milk Program           | 1,078                | 175,359,496              | 29.7%         | 23,958         | 16.8%         | 662,465           | 174,298        |
| Stock Formation        | 68                   | 46,483,951               | 7.9%          | 11,135         | 7.8%          | -                 | 52,065         |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>     | <b>2,444</b>         | <b>590,350,541</b>       | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>142,985</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>10,566,635</b> | <b>510,913</b> |

Source: MDS and National Food Supply Company

In 2009, 34.3 % of all the program's funds were allocated to the Purchase with Simultaneous Donation modality, under which the produce of 45.5 % of the farmers (65,000 farmers) covered by the PAA was bought. The program for distributing milk bought from family farmers had 29.7 % of all the program's funds allocated to it and covered 16.8 % of all farmers assisted by it. The Direct Procurement for stock formation or donation modality kept 28.2 % of the program's funds and involved 30 % of the family farmers covered by the PAA in 2009.

The distribution of PAA funds in 2009 by region revealed their concentration in the northeast region, to which 44.9 % of the funds were allocated and where 56,574 farmers were assisted. The concentration of funds in this region is partly explained by the Milk Distribution Program, which is concentrated in this region and in the north area of Minas Gerais state (*see Table 4 on the next page*).

The south region kept 27.5 % of the funds and assisted 42,491 family farmers and its funds were mainly applied in the direct procurement modality. The family farmers of this region are the most organized ones.

Of all Units of the Federation, Rio Grande do Sul and Minas Gerais were the ones to which most of the PAA funds were allocated in 2009, accounting for 16.4 % and 13.8 % of all the program's funds, respectively.

**Table 4 – PAA: Direct Procurement, Stock Formation, Purchase with Simultaneous Donation and Milk Program: Funds applied by Unit of the Federation and Region – 2009**

| Unit of the Federation | N. of municipalities | Value of purchases (R\$) |               | Family farmers |               | Families covered  | Quantity       |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|
|                        |                      | R\$                      | %             | N.             | %             | N.                | Tons           |
| <b>North</b>           | <b>205</b>           | <b>23,186,074</b>        | <b>3,9%</b>   | <b>8,822</b>   | <b>6,2%</b>   | <b>382,685</b>    | <b>14,908</b>  |
| Acre                   | 7                    | 2,313,764                | 0.4%          | 662            | 0.5%          | 12,063            | 2,133          |
| Rondônia               | 36                   | 9,542,810                | 1.6%          | 3,803          | 2.7%          | 12,296            | 6,538          |
| Amazonas               | 12                   | 3,171,399                | 0.5%          | 933            | 0.7%          | 40,716            | 2,825          |
| Amapá                  | 7                    | 162,958                  | 0.0%          | 95             | 0.1%          | 8,000             | 52             |
| Roraima                | 6                    | 409,481                  | 0.1%          | 109            | 0.1%          | 54,892            | 170            |
| Pará                   | 9                    | 727,751                  | 0.1%          | 211            | 0.1%          | 152,648           | 756            |
| Tocantins              | 128                  | 6,857,911                | 1.2%          | 3,009          | 2.1%          | 102,070           | 2,435          |
| <b>Northeast</b>       | <b>1,488</b>         | <b>264,875,972</b>       | <b>44.9%</b>  | <b>56,574</b>  | <b>39.6%</b>  | <b>3,940,702</b>  | <b>214,835</b> |
| Maranhão               | 90                   | 11,703,094               | 2.0%          | 1,744          | 1.2%          | 68,616            | 8,225          |
| Piauí                  | 226                  | 8,643,143                | 1.5%          | 3,196          | 2.2%          | 245,873           | 7,306          |
| Ceará                  | 245                  | 50,235,646               | 8.5%          | 10,108         | 7.1%          | 1,127,034         | 30,383         |
| Rio Grande do Norte    | 159                  | 14,175,859               | 2.4%          | 4,872          | 3.4%          | 841,093           | 5,075          |
| Paraíba                | 235                  | 40,255,192               | 6.8%          | 5,910          | 4.1%          | 188,987           | 31,637         |
| Pernambuco             | 203                  | 39,881,804               | 6.8%          | 8,941          | 6.3%          | 320,732           | 46,076         |
| Alagoas                | 148                  | 29,314,528               | 5.0%          | 5,162          | 3.6%          | 661,502           | 28,604         |
| Bahia                  | 121                  | 50,468,063               | 8.5%          | 12,651         | 8.8%          | 421,051           | 41,540         |
| Sergipe                | 61                   | 20,198,643               | 3.4%          | 3,990          | 2.8%          | 65,814            | 15,990         |
| <b>Southeast</b>       | <b>341</b>           | <b>125,959,891</b>       | <b>21.3%</b>  | <b>31,097</b>  | <b>21.7%</b>  | <b>3,622,570</b>  | <b>123,800</b> |
| Minas Gerais           | 328                  | 81,418,813               | 13.8%         | 19,027         | 13.3%         | 1,677,020         | 76,120         |
| Espírito Santo         | 1                    | 1,524,881                | 0.3%          | 525            | 0.4%          | 50,552            | 1,586          |
| Rio de Janeiro         | -                    | 498,443                  | 0.1%          | 120            | 0.1%          | 37,782            | 435            |
| São Paulo              | 12                   | 42,517,754               | 7.2%          | 11,425         | 8.0%          | 1,857,216         | 45,659         |
| <b>South</b>           | <b>349</b>           | <b>162,613,737</b>       | <b>27.5%</b>  | <b>42,491</b>  | <b>29.7%</b>  | <b>2,313,821</b>  | <b>144,584</b> |
| Paraná                 | 247                  | 44,799,130               | 7.6%          | 12,896         | 9.0%          | 1,665,054         | 37,781         |
| Santa Catarina         | 36                   | 20,873,882               | 3.5%          | 6,412          | 4.5%          | 616,019           | 11,022         |
| Rio Grande do Sul      | 66                   | 96,940,725               | 16.4%         | 23,183         | 16.2%         | 32,748            | 95,781         |
| <b>Mid-West</b>        | <b>61</b>            | <b>13,714,868</b>        | <b>2.3%</b>   | <b>4,001</b>   | <b>2.8%</b>   | <b>306,857</b>    | <b>12,786</b>  |
| Mato Grosso do Sul     | 31                   | 6,646,210                | 1.1%          | 1,728          | 1.2%          | 173,720           | 5,717          |
| Mato Grosso            | 28                   | 4,587,963                | 0.8%          | 1,556          | 1.1%          | 66,527            | 5,829          |
| Goiás                  | 2                    | 2,480,694                | 0.4%          | 717            | 0.5%          | 66,610            | 1,240          |
| Federal District       | -                    | -                        | 0.0%          | -              | 0.0%          | -                 | -              |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>     | <b>2,444</b>         | <b>590,350,541</b>       | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>142,985</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>10,566,635</b> | <b>510,913</b> |

Source: MDS

## **PAA MODALITIES AND FINANCIAL LIMITS PER FAMILY FARMER**

The individual limits per family farmer/year and PAA modality approved at the end of 2009 are the following ones:

I – Food Procurement for the School Meal Program: up to R\$ 9,000.00 (nine thousand reais). This is the amount for purchases with funds from the National School Meal Program (Pnae) of the Ministry of Education.

II – Direct Food Procurement from Family Farmers (CD) for distribution of food products or for establishing public stocks: up to R\$ 8,000.00 (eight thousand reais).

III – Support to the Establishment of Stocks by Family Farmers (FE): up to R\$ 8,000.00 (eight thousand reais).

IV – Food Procurement from Family Farmers with Simultaneous Donation (CDL): up to R\$ 4,500.00 (four thousand, five hundred reais) or Direct Local Food Procurement from Family Farmers with Simultaneous Donation: up to R\$ 4,500.00 (four thousand, five hundred reais).

V – Incentives to Milk Production and Consumption (PL): up to R\$ 4,000.00 (four thousand reais) per half year.

For the purpose of calculating the maximum amount, purchases under different PAA modalities and by different agents are cumulative, except as indicated in item IV. For purchases from co-operatives, associations or informal groups, the maximum amount is considered per family farmer from whom food products are bought under the Food Acquisition Program.

## **NEW PRICE GUARANTEE MECHANISMS FOR FAMILY FARMERS**

### **PGPAF – FAMILY FARMING PRICE GUARANTEE PROGRAM**

As more credit was granted under the Pronaf and because family farming has an insurance against climatic risks (Seaf), the federal government created the Family Farming Price Guarantee Program (PGPAF) in 2006 with the aim of:

- a) Ensuring favorable prices for family farming products.
- b) Ensuring the continuity of family farming productive activities.
- c) Stimulating diversification of the agriculture/livestock production of family farmers.
- d) Linking up various agricultural credit and marketing policies.

For a farmer to have access to the PGPAF program, the financed crop must have a guaranteed price as a family farming crop, which is based on the specific family farming production cost. In the 2009-2010 agricultural year, 35 products are contemplated which together account for over 90 % of all the Pronaf financings.

Once the annual guaranteed price is established, a discount bonus is granted for each month in which market prices are below the guaranteed price to make up for the difference, and the maximum amount allowed per farmer each year is up to R\$ 5,000.00. For beans, for example, a staple food item in Brazil whose prices varied intensely in 2009, an average bonus of 17 % was granted, with peaks of 24 % in December. A farmer with a financing of R\$ 7,400.00 from the Pronaf thus had a bonus of R\$ 1,776.00. The PGPAF is managed by a Managing Committee made up of representatives of four ministries: three financial ministries and the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA), which is the agency in charge of implementing the public policy.

An important innovation of the PGPAF in relation to other public policies designed to ensure the safe marketing of family farming products lies in the fact that there is no need to purchase the financed product physically, which apart from ensuring greater operational speed dramatically reduces the operational costs of this public policy.

With the PGPAF, family farmers know that their products financed with rural credit lines under the Pronaf will have their production costs covered. Therefore, a farmer will not have to sell property to pay off his or her loan when market prices fall below production costs and the local economy is kept healthy by assured credit flows and by the income that is generated.

## **PNAE – NATIONAL SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM**

As public policies for family farming advanced and were consolidated, a comprehensive dialogue could be held with education-

al sectors with the aim of connecting these two important actors involved in implementing the domestic policy. The Pnae has been in operation in Brazil for over fifty years and it has been redesigned and updated over the years. One of its features was that of ensuring the supply of food items that were not purchased locally and did not take into account local food habits. In 2009, when Law n. 11,947 was passed, this reality began to change.

In its article 14, this law provides that at least 30% of the funds transferred by the National Education Development Fund to the school meal program are to be used to buy food from family farmers and rural family entrepreneurs or their organizations, giving priority to farmers settled under the agrarian reform program and indigenous and *Quilombo* communities. It should be highlighted that the Pnae transfers R\$ 3.1 billion to states and schools every year.

Whenever possible, the food should be procured in the same municipality where the schools are located. When supply is not available locally, the schools can have their demand met by farmers of the region, rural territory, state and country, in this order of priority.

The new law was regulated by Resolution n. 38/2009 issued by the Deliberative Council of the FNDE – National Education Development Fund, which describes the operational procedures to be observed in the sale of family farming food to the Executing Agencies. The Executing Agencies are the state and municipal education secretariats and federal basic education networks or their sponsoring agencies, which receive funds directly from the FNDE and are responsible for procuring food for the National School Meal Program (Pnae). However, to foster this connection between family farming and the school meal program, the principles and guidelines established by the Pnae must be observed: (i) healthy and appropriate nourishment; (ii) respect for the food culture and traditions and healthy food habits; (iii) social control; (iv) food and nutrition security; (v) sustainable development, which means procuring diversified and locally grown food items.

From the point of view of family farming production, this connection is instrumental in: (i) ensuring access to an institutional food procurement market, allowing for farmers to begin to learn how to develop a relationship with the market (development of brands, quality notions, frequency, etc.); (ii) guaranteeing food security with regional production, strengthening production diversification; (iii) income generation and value-adding, strengthening

municipal economies; (iv) sustainability of the development model by strengthening associativism and cooperativism.

Students in elementary schools are fed by the Pnae during the period in which they attend them, totaling about 53 million children, young people and adults throughout the national territory. In 2010, the Pnae budget earmarked for food procurement from family farmers totals about R\$ 1 billion. The food suppliers can be organized groups of family farmers (characterized by the DAP) or informal groups set up for marketing purposes. The groups that are already selling their products to the PAA – Food Acquisition Program – can also supply them to the Pnae. The limit imposed for procurement for the school meal program is R\$ 9,000.00 per family/year.

As the law is applied, municipalities and states will buy food products from family farmers, keeping the funds used for this purpose in the local economy, boosting it, and respecting local food habits. Also worthy of mention is the low cost of this policy for the federal government, as the above-mentioned law only organizes the procurement system of the school meal program, generating specific opportunities for family farmers. Once again, the State is creatively expanding the scope of its policies.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the PAA was created, in 2003, the program has been growing both in terms of the number of beneficiary farmers and of resources and experience acquired in the process of managing and operating it. In these seven years, over R\$ 3 billion were invested, benefiting about 140 families of family farmers every year as suppliers and 15 million people through donations of food products.

Because of these results, this program is seen as a major example of good practices in public policies in support of family farmers and food security promoted by the Brazilian Government in recent years. The priority attached by the current federal administration to social issues at large and to family farming in particular, with emphasis on food and nutrition security, is one of its many innovations.

The PAA is seen as a food marketing tool and a mechanism that complements the National Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming (Pronaf) by effectively supporting family farmers in their inclusion in the market.

The PAA has enabled many family farmers to bear their production costs, including costs with labor, supply organization and planning, and food classification, packaging, storage and quality processes. For its consumers, it expanded the diversity and quality of the food available to them, contributing to preserve regional food habits and cultures.

Economic organizations, associations, cooperatives and civil society organizations have been playing an active role in the program's implementation by mobilizing and organizing its beneficiaries, removing obstacles to compliance with conditions for participation in it, and promoting improvements in the frameworks of beneficiaries and their organizations.

The cross-cutting nature of the actions taken by the Executive Branch to implement the program involves a sound institutional dialogue between its different managers, as flexibilization is a key operational feature of the program, without losing sight, however, of its structuring conditions.

Likewise, different actors are involved in the program's execution end, both at the institutional level and at the level of organizations of family farmers and charities. This is a prerequisite for defining guidelines based on procedural and implementation evaluations, so that this policy is appropriately maintained, improved and expanded for the exemplary purpose of ensuring the continuity of the program's positive impacts both on family farming and on food supply in areas marked by food insecurity.

It should be highlighted that investments must be increased to consolidate and expand the program's experiences so far, and not only in relation to funds to maintain and expand existing projects, but also to propose new and complementary projects based on its accumulated experiences.

Brazil has surely developed a set of strategies that allow the country to advance in ensuring food and nutrition security and, concomitantly, the economic inclusion of thousands of rural families. This is being done in combination with many other public policy initiatives for strengthening public institutions and family farming at large. However, some challenges remain:

*Increased coverage* – many family farmers accessed some public policies for the first time, such as the Pronaf, which has more than 2.2 million beneficiaries. However, the Agriculture/Livestock

Census (2006) calculated 4.4 million rural family establishments, even if many of them are just places of residence. Therefore, the continued effort of all public institutions is justified.

*Development of links among public policies* – complex dilemmas in rural areas, such as poverty and environmental problems, should be tackled once and for all through different continuous and linked public policies. New legal frameworks and institutional arrangements are currently under discussion to address the problem of the isolated and fragmented implementation of various public policies by different ministries.

*Thematic and regional focus* – Brazilian agriculture is complex, multifunctional, pluri-active and scattered throughout the national territory. Despite the need to preserve and expand farmers' access to classic agricultural policies (credit, rural extension, insurances and markets), these policies should be organized around the development of Brazilian biomes (semi-arid region, the Amazon region, the Cerrado region, and others) and also focus on topics currently under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture: food security, environment and agroenergy.

*Empowerment strategies* – the challenge consists in organizing the family farming sector around sectoral policies, seeking to make it grow in scale, to ensure its inclusion in markets, and to develop brands of its own based on specific regional cultural features. The cooperativism and associativism of family farming are tools that should be taken into account in any policy intended to promote rural development in Brazil.

The Pronaf has evolved as a result of increasingly stable fund sources and of the expansion and delimitation of its specific audience, namely, family farmers, and also of measures to simplify its modus operandi in the domestic financial system more and more. However, new paths should be sought to extend its coverage to very impoverished populations through new operators in the financial system and mechanisms to ensure easier access to credit (more involvement of state and municipal government, complementary funds, etc.). In addition, it is also necessary to continue to train and qualify farmers in their economic activities and also to ensure improved access to information on how public policies operate and on how one can access their benefits, with emphasis on rural credit.

Pronaf's sustainability over time and its low default rate are attributed to its low financial costs and to the availability of climate in-

insurance mechanisms (Seaf) and price guarantee tools (PGPAF) linked to credit, while financial institutions manage the moral risk. Before 2004, governmental actions were more sporadic and late and they were usually taken only after fortuitous events took place, through the extension of loan repayment deadlines or deductions in financings.

The experience of implementing the PAA generated significant inputs for developing other essentially market-based policies. A good example is the School Meal Law (Pnae), the purposes of which are strengthening local and regional marketing venues, fostering the circulation of riches in the region, recovering regional food habits and, mainly, promoting the establishment of associations or cooperatives, which play an instrumental role in the process of organizing food production and protecting the economy of the poorest segments of the population.

However, seven years after it was created, the PAA can only assist 143,000 families each year of an estimated total number of family farmers (which produce surpluses) of over 2 million families.

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## 9. TERRITORIES OF CITIZENSHIP: INNOVATION IN THE WAKE OF THE ZERO HUNGER PROGRAM

*Caio Galvão de França  
Joaquim Soriano*

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, a democratic agenda for rural development was consolidated in Brazil. It is an agenda that provides momentum and expression to the enhancement of democracy in the country.

This is a recent achievement in relation to a not so distant past in which agriculture and rural areas were seen as internal obstacles to development or as sectors subordinated to the requirements of urbanization and industrialization. Rural areas were associated with backwardness, poverty and with zones one had to leave to be able to exercise basic citizenship rights. Only dominant large landowners were seen as productive and as the legitimate target audience of economic policies.

Little by little, Brazil is eliminating the invisibility imposed on various social sectors and developing an appreciation for the diversity of agriculture and rural areas for their potential to promote a more balanced occupation of the Brazilian territory and regions, and for the sustainability and dynamism they can lend to the country's development.

Today, this potential has become even more relevant due to the role rural areas can play in the process of addressing three contemporary topics that will define possibilities for Brazil's future – food security, climate change, and the new energy matrix<sup>1</sup>.

This rural development agenda is an element of the new development model being consolidated in Brazil, which combines economic growth with income distribution and access to rights. This scenario is the result of a redefined macroeconomic policy, which since 2003 began to attach importance to fighting poverty,

1. On family farming in these contemporary agendas, see CASSEL, 2010.

reducing inequalities in income distribution, generating more jobs and ensuring higher wages<sup>2</sup>.

Beyond this general landmark, two elements played a key role in defining this agenda and in creating appropriate conditions for implementing it. The first one consisted in changes in the paradigm for overcoming hunger and poverty, of which the Zero Hunger Project is the ultimate expression. The second one was the assertion of the social identity of family farming and the legitimization of differentiated agricultural public policies.

The Zero Hunger Project was based on the notion of turning the need to eradicate hunger and ensure the human right to food into a central element of the domestic agenda by revealing the historical and structural causes of hunger, promoting appreciation for the role of the State and social mobilization, and doing away with the false dichotomy between the economic and social realms.

In the counter-current of the neoliberal project and of the policies adopted by the previous federal administration, the Zero Hunger Program pointed out the need to combine structural policies with emergency interventions. To overcome the “vicious circle of hunger” it would be necessary to address the issue of “insufficient demand,” changing the economic model; it would also be necessary to promote social inclusion and lower food prices for the low-income population. The greatest expression of this approach would be one of building a national food and nutrition security policy with measures to be implemented immediately and suggested guidelines for promoting structural changes<sup>3</sup>.

Another key element of this new rural development agenda was the assertion of the social identity of family farming, which comprises a set of unique production relations and appropriation and use of natural resources, involving small men and women landowners, squatters, people settled under the agrarian reform program, extrac tivists, people living in flood plains, and other traditional communities. This recognition of the unique social features of rural areas and agriculture, which resulted from a long history of struggle of these sectors and from intense intellectual debates, put an end to a long historical period of exclusiveness in the representation of the interests of rural dwellers<sup>4</sup>. It also contributed to the perception of internal

2. See BARBOSA, 2010.

3. See Chapter 1 of this book, “Zero Hunger Project: Summary Document,” Citizenship Institute.

4. See MARQUES, DEL GROSSI, FRANÇA, 2010.

diversity in this sector, particularly of the diversity expressed in gender relations and in the inequality imposed on rural women, including in family farming settings.

The political recognition of new actors from the rural world, “breaking the monopoly of large farmers and agribusiness, paved the way for a large number of innovative projects and contributed to show that options for changing the rural world include multiple alternatives and possibilities” (GARCIA JR. and HEREDIA, 2010). The fundamental need of political plurality for democratizing the country was thus asserted.

This recognition was expressed at the level of the State through the creation and consolidation of a set of differentiated public policies that enhanced the economic protagonism of family farming and redefined its economic inclusion at the local, regional and national level<sup>5</sup>. These policies were designed to ensure the right to the land, to a more democratic land ownership framework, to production support and to assured income – credit, technical assistance, marketing, electricity, agro-industrialization, price and climate insurance – as well as to promote equality and economic autonomy for rural women, territorial development, and regional integration.

The convergence of these elements and changes in the governmental agenda in the second term of president Lula led to creation of the “Territories of Citizenship” Program. The goal of this article is to analyze the Territories of Citizenship Program as an element of this new rural development agenda. The Territories of Citizenship Program was conceived to expand and consolidate the program against hunger following the trail opened by the Zero Hunger Program that was paved by the new political and institutional conditions created by the Lula administration, as a new strategy to eradicate rural poverty and make room not only for ensuring access to rights and social and productive inclusion, but also for promoting development in the regions.

This article is structured in five sections, besides this small introduction. In the next section, we will describe some of the aspects of the Zero Hunger Project and their unfolding into sectoral

5. In their description of the evolution of the legal framework for family farming, Del Grossi and Marques (2010) highlight some of the main moments in the path of its recognition by the Brazilian State.

public policies that contributed to the creation of the Territories of Citizenship Program. Section three provides a description of the process of drawing up the program and of its inclusion in the government agenda. Section four describes the program, with emphasis on its institutional arrangement and management cycle, and provides some preliminary evaluations. The last section consists in final considerations on elements of the program and on their contribution to the new rural development agenda.

## THE ZERO HUNGER PROGRAM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Zero Hunger Project was conceived in a scenario of criticism against the notion of market supremacy and non-responsibility of the State for ensuring rights and, more specifically, against focalized policies against hunger that are not applied to the population at large. It resulted from a proactive initiative of civil society, which was determined to have a say in the definition of public policies and governmental actions in a scenario of criticism of the neoliberal hegemony.

The Project was publicly challenged both by those who insisted on the need to adopt focalized social policies and by those for whom ensuring a minimum income was the best approach to fighting hunger and poverty. It was also criticized by people who believed that the project was impracticable and unfeasible from the budget and financial point of view<sup>6</sup>.

The project was assumed by the Workers' Party and included in Lula's governmental program in the presidential elections of 2002. When the Lula administration was inaugurated, in 2003, the Zero Hunger Project became a strategy for various sectoral actions and policies designed to promote changes in the economic policy and in the role of the State, whose focus was switched to promoting growth with income distribution and to ensuring enhanced access to social rights. It also became a benchmark for initiatives of the President of the Republic to raise the profile of the topic in the international agenda, such as that of the International Action Against Hunger and Poverty.

6. See the chapter of this book called "For the Critics of the Zero Hunger Program"

For tackling the situation of people facing food insecurity, the State had to resume its role in improving living conditions in rural areas, where the problem was proportionally more serious and there was a need to increase food production. The option adopted by the new government was to face this challenge by creating a social protection net and a national food security policy combined with differentiated sectoral policies for family farming and a better-quality agrarian reform, which would be mostly coordinated by the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA).

As highlighted by Graziano (2009), for the programs contemplated in the Zero Hunger Program to begin to produce actual results it was necessary to strengthen, build and rebuild institutions and tools intended to foster family farming, after years in which the capacity of the State to do so had been dismantled.

These topics were elements of historical claims of social movements in rural areas and were priorities of the governmental program proposed by the candidate Lula, contained in a sectoral document called *Vida Digna no Campo* (a dignified life in rural areas).

In the initial dynamic of the federal administration, the focus placed on agrarian reform policies and on policies designed to strengthen family farming resulted more from the fact that they were important elements of the Zero Hunger Program, which occupied a prominent position in the government agenda already, than from a specific recognition of the importance of these sectoral policies. As time went by, these topics gained autonomy, stature and greater recognition in the government, besides becoming governmental priorities. This fact is expressed in the amount of funds invested in them and in the reach of the differentiated policies, in the importance gained by the Ministry of Agrarian Development, and in an increasing appreciation for a resignified rural context in the domestic agenda.

Family farming and the agrarian reform became elements of the structural policies contemplated in the Zero Hunger Program intended to “reduce the food vulnerability of families by increasing their household income, universalizing social rights and the access of the population to quality food, and reducing social inequalities.” The need to provide “incentives to family farming” required an agricultural policy aimed at increasing food production and protecting low-income farmers by providing them with credit, techni-

cal assistance, agricultural insurance, marketing mechanisms, research and infrastructure<sup>7</sup>.

Much of what was originally planned was accomplished and all of these policies are now operational. The pillars of the strategy of the Zero Hunger Program resulted in the establishment of a comprehensive social protection net based on universal conditioned cash transfer policies and public rural development policies linked to the national food and nutrition security policy, focused on strengthening the economic and social protagonism of rural populations<sup>8</sup>.

But the experience went beyond this. It allowed for the structuring of a set of policies aimed at promoting autonomy and equality for rural women, who are particularly affected by poverty. A combination of affirmative policies and cross-cutting actions was built based on a dialogue with rural women's organizations and movements. And a territorial development policy was structured as the expression of a more comprehensive vision of rural areas and as a new benchmark for planning and managing regional development with social participation.

Gradual changes in the economic policy in the then-prevailing scenario of low economic dynamism made it possible to significantly expand social policies and tools in support of family farming. Little by little, the assumptions that changes in the economic model were necessary for eliminating hunger and ensuring food security effectively were confirmed.

In this more favorable scenario, in 2007, the second term of president Lula began with the announcement of a daring plan for public and private investments in infrastructure, the Growth Acceleration Program (PAC), and of a comprehensive social agenda focused on ensuring universal access to fundamental rights. This is a combination that symbolizes the merging of economic and social goals as inseparable elements of a new national development standard.

In relation to rural development, after a stage in which sectoral policies for strengthening family farming, implementing an agrarian reform, and promoting equality for women, territorial development and regional integration were drawn up and imple-

7. See chapter 1 of this book, "Zero Hunger Project: summary document," Citizenship Institute.

8. For an analysis of advances observed in sectoral rural development policies, see FRANÇA, DEL GROSSI and MARQUES, 2010.

mented, the challenge was one of coordinating and integrating them around a common strategic purpose – fostering sustainable rural development.

As political and institutional experience accumulated, inter-sectoral and inter-governmental actions gained more importance and more favorable conditions were ensured for their implementation. It was in the confluence between the new national development standard and sectoral rural development policies and the maturing of a federative and inter-sectoral agenda that the strategy against rural poverty was updated, with the establishment of the Territories of Citizenship Program.

### PREPARATION OF THE TERRITORIES OF CITIZENSHIP PROGRAM AND ITS INCLUSION IN THE GOVERNMENT AGENDA

The Territories of Citizenship Program (PTC) was launched in February 2008, almost one year after its initial design was presented by the MDA. The process of drawing it up and including it in the government agenda was rich and complex and involved other ministries gradually, resulting in its inclusion in the Social Agenda as a government priority in the second term of president Lula.

The approval and enthusiasm of the President of the Republic, added to the persistent action of the Civil House, the body in charge of coordinating the priorities of the federal administration, resulted in the adhesion of various ministries, which recognized the PTC's potential to address difficulties they were facing to reach rural populations with sectoral actions and policies. These difficulties were derived from the limitations of existing public policies and arrangements and from the institutionalized weight of political and economic domination mechanisms that prevailed in rural areas, as well as from the spatial dispersion of rural populations and the weak institutional presence of State agencies in rural areas.

An argument reiterated in meetings with other federal agencies was the possibility of a spillover of the results of sectoral policies, which would have a cumulative effect and enhance the potential of sectoral actions to improve the living conditions of the program's target audience<sup>9</sup>.

9. Observation made by Márcia Carvalho Ribeiro, a member of the team in charge of drawing up the program.

The MDA's experience in reaching rural populations, as evinced by the rapid expansion of the scope of its policies, and the fact that inequality and poverty persisted in rural areas despite their consistent and slow reduction since the late 1990s, were also seen as positive and useful benchmarks for the interministerial effort to come up with new strategies and public action modalities in rural areas.

The Civil House, to which the Presidency of the Republic delegated authority to summon other ministries and which is experienced in coordinating inter-sectoral actions and programs, played a key role in all the process of detailing and adjusting the initial proposal. In all intra-governmental joining of forces and redefinitions, the program was expanded and changed and, mainly, positive internal conditions were created for implementing it.

Therefore, the drawing up of the program and its inclusion in the government agenda resulted from accumulated institutional conditions and policies, from the new scenario created by Lula's victory in the presidential elections, and from the new horizon defined for the second term of the president.

As indicated in the governmental program, the program's core objective would be one of promoting a new long-term development cycle aimed at reducing social and regional inequalities based on the new conditions created by the "transition" initiated in 2003, recognizing the need to expand social programs and ensure universal access to rights (WORKERS' PARTY, 2006).

During the electoral process, the social policies in question were criticized by people who challenged the capacity of assistential actions to create the necessary conditions for empowering their beneficiaries. While recognizing their importance, critics emphasized the need to consolidate "ways out of poverty" and to promote job, work and income generating alternatives and economic autonomy. This concern was also taken into account in the governmental program, according to which the expansion of the network of basic services for beneficiaries of the Family Grant program should be accompanied by actions "to generate jobs and income through an interministerial program designed to foster the self-sufficiency of the assisted families" (WORKERS' PARTY, 2006).

Right at the beginning of his second term in office, the president announced his intention to innovate in the realm of social policies. Based on positive evaluations, he proposed a "new baseline"

for policies and indicated that one of his targets was to promote an “inter-sectoral approach, based on integrated policies to create synergies, maximize resources, enhance the potential of actions.” At that moment, apart from proposing “inter-sectoral actions integrated in a cross-cutting fashion,” the federal government established a nexus through the convergence of efforts in territorial actions as a condition to eliminate social exclusion and poverty (BRAZIL, 2007c).

As part of the process of preparing the Growth Acceleration Program and more intensely after it was launched, in January 2007, the federal government discussed, under the coordination of the Civil House and of the Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management (MPOG), the creation of a Social Agenda defining guidelines and mechanisms for linking up and improving social policies and programs and a set of measures aimed at consolidating rights and reducing social inequalities.

The renewed continuity of the Lula administration ensured a more favorable institutional scenario for innovations in social policies and a more suitable environment for the articulation and coordination of sectoral actions. In addition, the existence of a “simultaneous and permanent bundle of public policies” – an expression used by Ignacy Sachs – with differentiated degrees of comprehensiveness and consolidation, paved the way for a new rural development cycle.

In tune with this orientation, the MDA, within its competencies, highlighted the need to integrate policies creatively and effectively, particularly the need to integrate social assistance, social security and cash transfer policies into production support, work and income generation and regional development policies. It also stressed, as a priority, the need to improve each differentiated policy internally and to make an effort to set a strategic common purpose for them, bringing them together and establishing spatial and temporal links between them for their target audience. This was a new sectoral agenda that sought to meet the reiterated demand from the president for public policies to be made available to their beneficiary populations jointly and at the same time.

In the institutional environment in which the social agenda of the federal administration was structured, the MDA, which discussed a coordinated action to improve the quality of life and of production in settlements of the agrarian reform program, prepared a more comprehensive proposal for linking policies and actions in the

country's poorest rural territories. Rural territories, defined as such in a recent policy, became a benchmark for inter-sectoral and inter-governmental coordination, comprising other sectoral policies, the main social policies and their various beneficiary audiences.

The process of detailing this program to tackle poverty in rural areas through a sustainable territorial development strategy incorporated the experience accumulated in different action areas of the MDA, as well as contributions from recent initiatives to link up policies, such as a pilot project to integrate actions of the Family Grant and Pronaf B (rural microcredit) programs in municipalities in the state of Ceará, a joint initiative involving the MDA, the Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Combat (MDS) and Banco do Nordeste, with the participation of other federal, state and municipal agencies and community associations.

It is worth mentioning the links between the new program and important elements involved in building the territorial development policy and more general standard actions carried out by the MDA. These elements include a more comprehensive vision of what the rural sector is all about, enhanced appreciation for social participation, the use of previously defined rural territories, the adoption of a territorial approach, articulation between public agencies and federated entities, and appreciation for territorial institutional structures as spaces for the management and social control of public policies.

The PTC was therefore drawn up taking into account the changes made to the government agenda, the dynamic of other social policies and changes in the role played by the MDA, which allowed for the horizons of policies to fight poverty and promote rural development to be redefined and expanded. In this new institutional scenario, which was more favorable to an interministerial and federative policy and to social participation, the PTC came up with a new, higher-quality architecture<sup>10</sup>.

The innovative character of the program was highlighted by Ignacy Sachs, who saw it as a turning point in public policies against poverty and inequalities for its decision to “crank up the economy in the least developed Brazilian territories, where the most recalcitrant pockets of extreme poverty are concentrated,” stirring “all the living forces of local society” into action, and because it is based on

10. See the evolution of the program's design in BRASIL, MDA, 2007a and 2007b, and BRASIL, MDA, 2008.

the assumption that territorial development should be agreed upon between all its stakeholders (SACHS, 2008).

Conservatives reacted immediately against the program, to the point of challenging the constitutionality of the presidential decree<sup>11</sup>. This ended up contributing to raise the profile of the program and encouraging expressions of support to it based on the efficiency gains it afforded and on the effective “integration on the ground” of the policies and their positive effects, including that of fostering the democratization of Brazilian society and dismantling traditional political domination mechanisms<sup>12</sup>.

## THE TERRITORIES OF CITIZENSHIP PROGRAM

When the program was launched, the importance it had acquired in the social agenda of the federal government could be clearly perceived as a new policy intended to integrate actions to eliminate poverty and social inequalities in rural areas, as part of a strategy to ensure rights and sustainable territorial development.

Just to give an idea of the size of the program, in its first year 60 territories were selected and in 2009 it was extended to 120 territories that accounted for 33 % of the all Brazilian municipalities; for 23 % of Brazil’s total population and for 42 % of its rural population; for 46 % of all family farming establishments; and for 67 % of farmers settled under the agrarian reform program.

It involves 180 budget actions of 22 ministries grouped in three structuring axes – i) support to productive activities; ii) citizenship and rights; iii) infrastructure – and in seven topics – i) sustainable production organization; ii) land-related actions; iii) education and culture; iv) rights and social development; v) health care, sanitation and access to water; vi) support to territorial management; vii) infrastructure.

The new program is based on four guidelines linked to the strategy of the Zero Hunger Program: planning and integration of

11. Direct Unconstitutionality Action (ADIn) n. 4,032 of February 26, 2008, filed by the democrats and by the Party of the Brazilian Social Democracy. Two other representations were filed with the High Electoral Court and the Federal Prosecutor’s Office.

12. These and other aspects were addressed in the articles: *Política vai parar de ganhar com a miséria* (*Valor Econômico*, Feb 28, 2008), by Maria Inês Nassif; *Cidadania e política* (*Correio Braziliense* newspaper, Feb 27, 2008), by Marcos Coimbra; *Oposição a quê?* and *Pode-se ou não fazer políticas para os pobres?* (*Gazeta Mercantil* newspaper, Mar 13, 2008 and Apr 22, 2008), by Ladislau Dowbor.

## THE 120 TERRITORIES OF CITIZENSHIP



public policies; enhanced social participation; efforts to universalize basic citizenship programs; productive inclusion of poor populations in the territories<sup>13</sup>.

The program is focused on rural territories consisting of sets of municipalities sharing common economic, social and cultural features. These rural territories with a preexisting identity had collegiate bodies made up of representatives of local governments and civil society. Territories with the lowest HDIs, low economic activity, greater concentration of family farmers, agrarian reform settlements and traditional rural communities, and the largest numbers of beneficiaries of the Family Grant Program were selected.

The matrix with all investments contemplated for each of the 120 territories resulted from the experience accumulated by

13. *Territórios da Cidadania: uma estratégia de desenvolvimento com inclusão social no Brasil rural*. Slide presentation for discussion with the Civil House, September 2007.

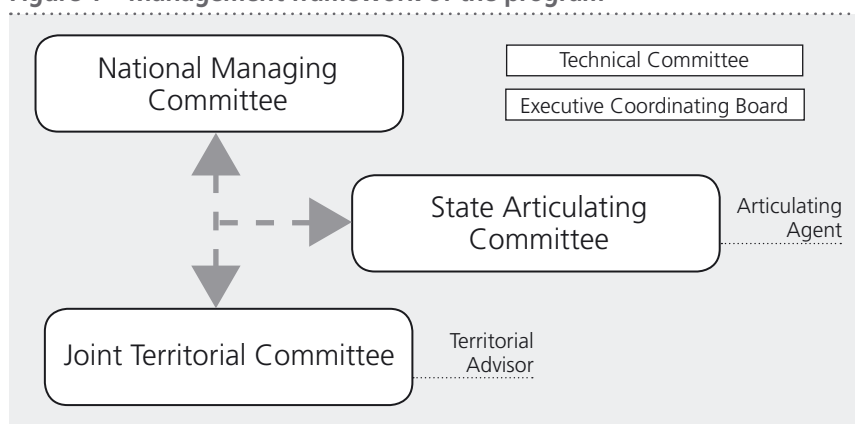
each government agency and from an interministerial dialogue, adjusted according to the demands of the joint territorial committees. All actions anticipated in the matrix were incorporated into the 2008-2011 Multi-Year Plan, which added one billion reais to the budget of the Ministry of Agrarian Development. Actions of state and municipal governments could be added to the federal matrix as part of efforts to develop a federative pact with a view to implementing the program<sup>14</sup>.

These investments are made after public consultations are held in the territories as a stage for defining agreements and ensuring social participation. In this process, priority actions, audiences and communities are defined and a territorial plan for integrated actions is prepared setting out the physical and financial execution of sectoral actions and goals. This agreed agenda is widely disseminated and posted on a virtual space specifically created for monitoring the program, the Territories of Citizenship Portal<sup>15</sup>.

## MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The program relies on a new management framework that involves national, state and territorial agencies and is made up of a National Managing Committee, a State Monitoring Committee (CAE) and a Joint Territorial Committee.

**Figure 1 – Management framework of the program**



14. In each state, a Federative Cooperation Protocol was signed by the Federal Government (President of the Republic), the state (Governor) and municipalities (Mayor) for carrying out cooperative and solidarity-based actions to implement the Territories of Citizenship Program.

15. Available at: <[www.territoriosdacidadania.gov.br](http://www.territoriosdacidadania.gov.br)>.

The National Managing Committee is the highest-ranking body in charge of defining guidelines and of making adjustment decisions and it is composed of deputy ministers of the 22 ministries and federal agencies that participate in the Program<sup>16</sup>.

There is an executive coordinating board made up of the Civil House of the Presidency of the Republic (which is in charge of coordinating priority actions of the federal administration) and of the ministers of Agrarian Development and of Planning, Budget and Management and of the Institutional Relations Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic (which is in charge of the dialogue with state and municipal governments). It also relies on a supporting body, the Technical Committee, which follows up on the program's operationalization.

Each state has a CAE, a non-deliberative body set up for developing links, consultations, mobilization and monitoring of the program's actions composed of representatives of federal agencies in the states, state-level secretariats and public agencies, and municipalities covered by the program. The Committee is usually coordinated by the Federal Agrarian Development Agency (*Delegacia Federal de Desenvolvimento Agrário*), a decentralized body of the MDA.

The Joint Territorial Committees are preexisting social participation forums that were, for the most part, expanded after the program began to be implemented. These are parity forums made up of representatives of civil society and public authorities focused on ensuring social control over public policies and on improving policy actions and integrating them into a territorial development plan. Their operations are supported by public funds and hired professionals.

## THE MANAGEMENT CYCLE<sup>17</sup>

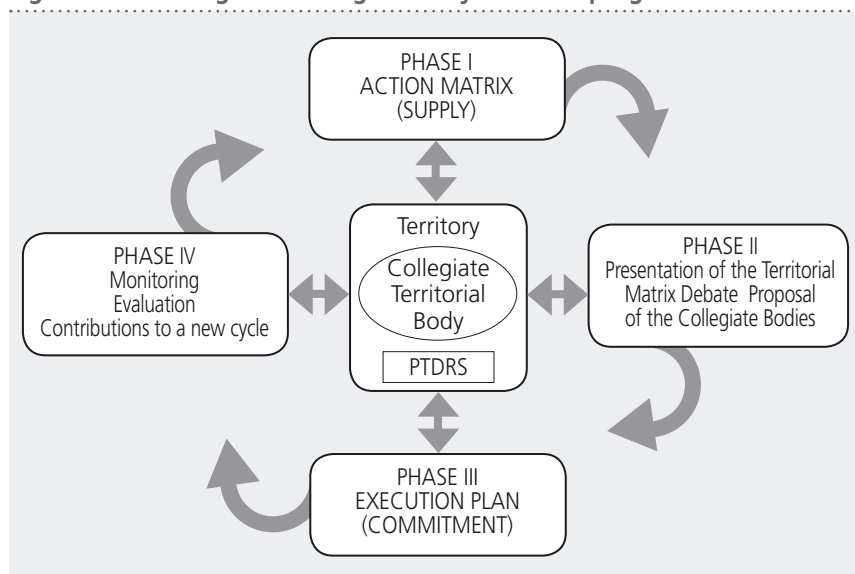
The Management Cycle establishes a programming, execution, monitoring and evaluation flow supported by specific tools applied to each stage.

16. These ministers and agencies are the following ones: Civil House of the Presidency of the Republic (CC/PR), Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA), Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management (MPOG), Institutional Relations Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic (SRI/PR), Secretariat General of the Presidency of the Republic, ministries of Finance, Mines and Energy, Health, National Integration, Labor and Employment, Education, Culture, Agriculture, Livestock and Supply, Environment, Cities, Social Development, Communications, Science and Technology and Fisheries and Aquiculture, Funasa, Incra, Special Secretariat for the Promotion Social Equality, Special Secretariat for Policies for Women, Funai, Banco do Brasil, Banco da Amazônia, Caixa Econômica Federal, Banco do Nordeste do Brasil and National Economic and Social Development Bank.

17. Section prepared based on a preliminary document drafted by the National Managing Committee called *Programa Territórios da Cidadania 2008-2010 – Relatório da Avaliação*.

The starting point is the programming of ministries and federal agencies with budget and extra-budget funds defined for actions to be carried out each year in each territory. It reflects a sectoral look on the territories and is expressed as a menu of federal actions. A national matrix is therefore developed with the program's aggregate data by budget item and a specific matrix for each territory.

**Figure 2 – Planning and management cycle of the program**



This “proposal” for actions of the federal government is submitted to the Joint Territorial Committee, which coordinates a public consultation process referred to as territorial debate. Opinions on the matrix are differentiated according to the possibilities authorized for each action. The matrix classifies four types of actions: deliberative, consultative, articulating and social control actions. There are, therefore, actions that are submitted to the deliberation of the territorial debate, which is coordinated by the Collegiate Body, while others are only the object of consultations that can result in the definition of priorities for the allocation of funds to, for example, certain audiences or localities.

The Collegiate Body also identifies six priority actions among those included in the matrix and three other actions which are also given priority but were not indicated in the matrix. These may be

included in the matrix in the following year and also contribute to adjustments in the design of public policies.

After this stage, the territorial matrix is adjusted based on the opinions of the Collegiate Body or by reason of technical or budget requirements identified by the managers of the actions. The result of this process is an Execution Plan, which expresses the commitment of the federal government to carry out the actions that will be implemented in each territory.

The actions are sectorally monitored and evaluated directly and exclusively by the federal agencies, which report their findings to the National Managing Committee, which in turn documents the information in an annual execution evaluation report that provides inputs for defining the matrix to be used in the following year.

## INITIAL ELEMENTS OF EVALUATION

In its initial years, the program's implementation was positively evaluated, as well the stability observed in the number of its actions and the increasing funds invested in it. In 2008, it involved 180 actions and R\$ 12.9 billion in investments, 77.8% of which were executed. In 2009, its actions amounted to 203, involving R\$ 19.3 billion in investments, of which 78.6% were executed. In 2010, there are plans to carry out 183 actions with R\$ 27 billion in investments, which will result in 5,200 additional construction projects.

In two years, over R\$ 29 billion were invested in Brazil's poorest rural territories. This means that poorer regions which had no access to public policies in the past began to be given priority. Social policies are being implemented where they were absent in the past as a result of the priority attached by the program to these territories, of the convergence of policies, creating a virtuous dynamic, of increased participation and social control, and of better federative links, all of which favored a more effective implementation of the policies. In addition, actions designed to promote productive inclusion to complement those carried out under the *Bolsa Família* Program were expanded (BRASIL, 2010).

The emphasis placed on the planning and integration of policies led to the establishment of a federative agenda for the program through the setting up and – still unequal – operation of 26

State Monitoring Committees. These actions also led state governments to change their state-level planning based on the territorial approach: ten states have already adopted the PTC strategy for defining their state-level action matrices (Bahia, Minas Gerais, Mato Grosso do Sul, Paraná, Goiás, Sergipe, Rondônia, Mato Grosso, Ceará and Rio de Janeiro) and ten other states divided their geographical areas into rural territories (Acre, Amapá, Pará, Goiás, Piauí, Sergipe, Rio Grande do Norte, Bahia, Sergipe and Espírito Santo) (BRASIL, 2010).

The productive inclusion of poor populations in the territories was also observed as a result of the combination of various actions, particularly credit, technical assistance and marketing actions. The program's efforts to ensure universal access to basic citizenship programs have already resulted in changes in sectoral policies based on demands from the territories. For example, changes were made to the criteria for accessing programs such as the *Farmácias Populares* (subsidized drugstores for the low-income population) program, the Digital Inclusion and Sites of Culture programs, the My Home, My Life (*Minha Casa, Minha Vida*) program, and rural sanitation policies.

Special mention should be made of several successful initiatives to integrate policies, such as of those taken to strengthen production chains in the Sisal (state of Bahia), Alto Sertão (state of Sergipe), Nordeste Paraense (state of Pará) and Grande Dourados (state of Mato Grosso do Sul) territories. In the Serra da Capivara territory (state of Piauí), actions to integrate policies involved combined investments in education, digital inclusion, and technical assistance; enhanced access to credit combined with the establishment of associations and cooperatives and actions to organize production; access to basic civil documents, social security and electricity. Another interesting case is that of the Madeira-Mamoré territory (state of Rondônia), where efforts are under way to integrate investments in infrastructure works (roads, a waterway, energy generation) contemplated in the Growth Acceleration Program into land regularization and technical assistance actions aimed at promoting sustainable production organization and access to rights and social development (BRASIL, 2010).

Some problems have been well identified already. The first one is a gap between the program's size and its institutional capaci-

ty, which restricts the possibilities of a more appropriate monitoring and follow-up on it. Alternatives are being discussed, among which that of strengthening its management and institutional framework and increasing the involvement of governmental agencies. This should result, among other things, in a specific and common system for monitoring the program's execution and implementation and also for measuring the policies' impact over time.

A second problem is the limited technical capacity of small municipalities to draw up and implement projects. To overcome this problem, laws were amended to provide for compulsory transfers of funds for actions of the program carried out by municipalities with populations of less than 50,000 and also for the provision of technical advisory and implementation of a training program on how to prepare and execute projects, involving the participation of Banco do Nordeste, SEBRAE (Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service) and Caixa Econômica Federal. Other measures under discussion include allocating funds to projects under tender and measures to simplify procedures and reduce counterparts (BRASIL, 2010).

Given the size of the investments contemplated in the PAC and their impact on the territories' economic and social dynamic, a broad range of possibilities can be explored which, to be taken advantage of appropriately, require closer links between construction projects and PTC actions.

Increasing the resources contemplated in the program is another challenge. Apart from the mobilization of endogenous resources of the Territories of Citizenship program, Sachs (2010) clearly and straightforwardly proposes that a National Solidarity Fund should be set up financed with a percentage of the national budget explicitly earmarked for reducing territorial and social disparities and/or part of the royalties charged for exploiting petroleum from the pre-salt layer. This is necessary considering the huge civilizing challenges involved and, more specifically, the gradual empowerment objectives of the Territories of Citizenship program in relation to the Family Grant program by creating paid work opportunities (jobs, self-employment opportunities and associations of all kinds) and reducing quality-of-life disparities between the different regions, while filling gaps in the social distribution of the income.

Three other elements should also be mentioned, as they are part of the program's agenda for the future. The first one consists in adjustments in the logic of sectoral policies based on the actual experience of implementing them in the Territories of Citizenship in combination with other policies, taking into account the feedback from social control mechanisms. The second one consists in discussing possibilities for expanding and improving social participation. And the third one consists in increasing the participation of state governments and city halls in the program by including some of their actions in the territorial matrix.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The program is a good example of a public policy being managed in an innovative fashion, with the aim of promoting inter-sectoral links within the federal government and between the different governmental spheres in the process of implementing a strategy for eradicating rural poverty and fostering sustainable territorial development with social inclusion and participation in priority regions, i.e. the Territories of Citizenship.

It resulted from a new public management approach and from an agenda meant to enhance democratic governance in Brazil, both because of the democratic dimension of its objective of ensuring universal access to rights and economic and social participation to rural populations and due to its affinity with specific aspects of the contemporary debate on public management.

The program is also a result of the recent debate on rural territorial development marked by innovation as a public management policy and as an experience in the territorial management of pre-existing sectoral policies. This is not to say, however, that it represents a completely new approach, since many of its innovations correspond to values contemplated in the design of other public policies, such as the *Bolsa Família* Program, the management approach of the Growth Acceleration Program and, particularly, the strategy adopted by the Zero Hunger Program and other territorial development policies.

The features of the program's planning and management framework are in tune with major institutional aspects of actions taken by the federal administration in a context of governance

(PACHECO, 2004). There is a clearly identified institutional locus in the State apparatus and an intra-governmental forum – the National Managing Committee, a political authority that can be held accountable for its decisions – the Executive Committee, an institutional channel for disseminating the program's actions systematically – the Territories of Citizenship portal, and an intergovernmental forum with sub-national spheres of government – the State-Level Monitoring Committee.

Other features also characterize the PTC as belonging to the contemporary agenda of public policies, among which the following ones: definition of rural development as a long-term goal; agreed management with various actors; social participation in actions suggested to be carried out; coordination of sectoral policies with territorial objectives; efforts to ensure integrated monitoring of actions; and learning with previous experiences and willingness to make necessary adjustments<sup>18</sup>.

The PTC followed a frequent path in public policies in that it was generated as an element of a governmental agenda and then transferred to the public arena, an inverse process to that of the Zero Hunger Project. It was established in a long “softening up” process since it was initially proposed by the MDA and then approved by the President, discussed at the Civil House and the Social Policy Chamber and redesigned as a result of a dialogue with other ministries. This was a long but fundamental process, since by exposing the program to competitive forums and by taking advantage of different opportunities to improve it, favorable conditions were created to legitimize it and ensure the feasibility of this innovation in public policies.

In this process, the MDA played a key role in adding initiatives and addressing recurring topics and public management priorities, such as ensuring social dialogue and control, universal access to rights, the federative agenda, public policy coordination, and territorial planning, among others. This role was necessary to place its concerns and vision on how to fight poverty and promote rural development at the center of the government agenda, to promote its alternatives in its dialogue with society and within the govern-

18 Cabinet Office, UK (1999). “Professional Policy Making for the Twenty First Century”, Report by the Strategic Making Team, apud PACHECO, 2004.

ment, and to take advantage of “windows of opportunity.” All of this process, combined with the attention given by the government to it and its relevance, ensured the program’s success.

The Territories of Citizenship Program took advantage of windows of opportunity observed in the initial stages of President Lula’s second term and in the process of building the Social Agenda, for which purpose it relied on the MDA’s accumulated experience in structuring sectoral rural development policies.

And it was not just a matter of including a topic in the government agenda, but one of making sure that promoting rural development would be a key concern and a topic to be focused on in the broader national development project. The program affords possibilities for furthering democracy, since its logic contributes to dismantle traditional mechanisms of domination and patronage and the mediation of congresspersons for securing federal funds, apart from enhancing political plurality and the sustainability of development.

More recently, the program aroused the interest of other countries, such as Paraguay, Peru, Ecuador and El Salvador, and was included in the Brazilian technical cooperation agenda in Latin America.

In this text, we made an effort to describe it in the context of the path opened by the Zero Hunger Program, highlighting common aspects and a few counterpoints that characterize it as an effort to bring the strategy to fight rural poverty up to date as a key element of a democratic rural development agenda.

The scenario is promising for eradicating extreme poverty and reducing social and regional inequalities. Official indicators show that poverty and inequality are being consistently and quickly reduced in rural areas. Poverty and inequality reduction in these areas is more intense than in urban areas, a fact that can be mainly attributed to rising labor incomes.

The qualitative expansion of the Territories of Citizenship Program will therefore be based on the virtuous combination of economic growth, income distribution, more synchronized public policies, enhanced capacity of the State, greater protagonism of family farming, more intense social participation and more democracy. The harvest is promising.

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## 10. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN THE ZERO HUNGER PROGRAM THE EXPERIENCE OF CONSEA

*Francisco Menezes*

### BACKGROUND

Like the previous process of building and consolidating a democratic, people's government, Lula's election to the presidency of Brazil in 2003 was not by chance. It resulted from the mobilization and organization of Brazilian society around an effort to promote much-needed changes toward building a fairer and more sovereign Brazil. Likewise, the preparation and implementation of the Zero Hunger Project were the culmination of a previous process of proposals and practical actions to fight hunger and promote food and nutrition security in Brazil experienced by governments (at the municipal and state levels) and social organizations.

Some of the main moments in this process will be recalled here for us to appreciate the importance of social participation and of the experience accumulated in promoting it. Obviously, the first moment to be considered is the key precursor role played by Josué de Castro in this context back in the 1940s and 1950s. He understood the tragedy of hunger based on his personal experience and close observation of this reality. He made it clear that the phenomenon of hunger is not a natural phenomenon or a curse imposed on certain peoples, but rather a social phenomenon that can only be tackled by human action. Still according to Josué de Castro, fighting hunger requires not only higher agricultural productivity, but better food distribution as well. For this purpose, he said it was necessary to take into account issues like land ownership concentration and soil degradation while considering the need to share the wealth equally. In his various books, particularly in *The Geography of Hunger*, the physician, sociologist and geographer Josué de Castro made an extraordinary contribution to the debate and practical actions on is-

sues that back in those decades challenged those who rejected the notion that hunger was a fatality which Brazilians and other peoples throughout the world had no choice but accept. He also made relevant contributions to reflections that followed, based on a combination of different fields of science for understanding the problem.

In the days of the military regime in Brazil, which began in 1964 and lasted for 21 years, Josué de Castro was exiled until he died and repressive measures were taken to silence those who wanted to address the causes of hunger, which affected millions of Brazilians. Despite the pressure, resistance against that situation emerged from the grassroots, when a movement against price hikes was launched late in the 1970s that mobilized housewives and workers against rising prices and the low purchasing power of the poorest segments of the Brazilian population, which could not acquire basic goods and services, particularly food. About 1.3 million signatures were collected and large protest demonstrations were staged against the indifference of the military regime to price hikes. Although they were not exactly successful in their claims, these movements laid the groundwork for future advances.

In 1985, during the first civil government after the military dictatorship, the term food security was officially used for the first time in a document of the Ministry of Agriculture called *Segurança Alimentar – proposta de uma política de combate à fome* (food security – a proposal for a policy against hunger). It should also be mentioned that, one year later, the 1st National Conference on Food and Nutrition was held under the auspices of the Ministry of Health, mobilizing health professionals and other sectors of society to discuss food- and nutrition-related topics.

The Constitution of 1988 was a landmark in Brazil's return to democracy, as it institutionalized society's participation in the life of the State through direct mechanisms such as referenda, elections and grassroots initiatives or by reinforcing the so-called Public Policy Managing Councils at the municipal, state and federal levels. These had already been tried in similar experiences in the past, in the form of the National Health Council, for example, which resulted from the intense activity of the sanitary reform movement. With the stimulus provided by the new Constitution and civil society's drive to exercise social control, added to the political will of some rulers, many other Public Policy Councils were set up.

With the food security topic the situation was not different. In 1991, as a result of the work carried out by the so-called “parallel government,” then led by Luís Inácio Lula da Silva as an alternative to the administration of president Collor de Melo, a proposal for a Food Security Policy was drawn up. Two years later, it was delivered to the new president Itamar Franco, who had assumed the presidency after Collor’s impeachment. This proposal contemplated the establishment of a National Food Security Council (Consea), which was set up in May 1993.

The establishment of Consea was favored by society’s intense mobilization against hunger immediately after Collor’s impeachment. That was when the so-called Campaign against Hunger, led by the Citizens’ Action against Hunger and Poverty and for Life, was launched. This movement relied on thousands of neighborhood and workplace committees, etc., which for three years took on the task of addressing the hunger problem by collecting and distributing food to social groups in greater need. This direct action of society actually showed how impatient the population was with a weak State that was not very willing to assume what should be one of its main responsibilities, that of ensuring food to all people living in the country. For this reason, although Consea was a consultative body made up of representatives of the government and, mostly, of civil society that was set up within the Presidency of the Republic, it took on the responsibility of leading the implementation of certain programs such as Prodeca – Food Distribution Program, involving the Citizens’ Action committees to act with the Civil Defense Department in distributing food baskets to populations affected by droughts in Brazil’s northeast region. This first experience of Consea revealed positive possibilities for the work of an inter-sectoral council, but it also exposed major hurdles for it to function effectively, as the main priority in those days was tackling an economic crisis (caused by spiraling inflation) and reducing public spending.

As a result of the work carried out by Consea, the 1st National Conference on Food Security was held in July 2004. This conference led to a strong mobilization of the states, mainly through the Citizens’ Action committees and national social movements led by the Single Workers’ Union (CUT), the Confederation of Agricultural Workers (Contag) and other entities and their offices in the states.

Apart from the mobilization that it secured, the conference left a legacy of resolutions that would guide the next steps of the movement for food security in Brazil. However, its guidelines could not be applied, as one year later the administration that succeeded that of Itamar Franco redefined the approach of its social policy by removing the priority previously given to fighting hunger and putting an end to the experience of Consea through a presidential decree. Social participation was depoliticized and redefined as “solidarity-based participation.”

In this new scenario, the committees of the Campaign against Hunger made an effort to remain active, but little by little the movement lost momentum. However, organizations that since the holding of the conference had made it a point to influence public policies more strongly continued to fight for the cause, despite the federal administration’s lack of interest. This attitude was evinced by the strong pressure applied by these organizations for social participation in the World Food Summit held in Rome in 1996. Initially, they forced the government to accept the idea of jointly drafting a document to be taken to the official forum and, later, they set up the largest civil society delegation to attend the conference. It was a period in which the concept of food security was more precisely defined and the understanding of its comprehensiveness was enhanced. Nutrition security was incorporated into the concept of food security and their interdependence was emphasized.

In 1998, the Brazilian Food and Nutrition Security Forum (FBSAN) was established in São Paulo city, incorporating approximately 100 organizations, including NGOs, social movements, children’s and land pastorals, academic institutions and others. At that moment, efforts were being made to develop closer links between these organizations in their participation, and the Forum was immediately faced with an opportunity and a challenge. Its request for recreating the National Consea was not met, but the election of new governors paved the way for setting up state-level Conseas, as indeed happened in four states.

## BUILDING THE ZERO HUNGER PROJECT

The Zero Hunger Project, which was prepared by the Citizenship Institute as of 2001 with the aim of submitting a proposal for

fighting hunger and developing a food security program for Brazil to the President of the Republic that would be elected at the end of 2002, relied on the inputs of some of the individuals who engaged most in the process described above of proposing ideas for public policies on food and nutrition security and influencing them. NGO representatives, academics, researchers and members of social movements, among others, participated in a huge effort since 2001 to carry out research, discuss and build proposals for tackling hunger and establish a Food and Nutrition Security Policy.

Based on the notion of the human right to food as a guiding principle for all the definitions that followed, the concept of food and nutrition security grew in maturity, hunger in Brazil and its causes were typified and existing public policy programs and their varying degrees of effectiveness were recognized, as well as possibilities for improving them. Gaps to be filled in these policies were identified in proposals for new programs and actions, as well as means to implement a true Food and Nutrition Security Policy.

It became clear that ensuring social participation was a major concern in these proposals. It should be observed that the need to recreate Consea was mentioned in the document containing the proposal of the Zero Hunger Project, which is only natural, as many members of the Brazilian Food Security Forum took part in the group that prepared it.

## SOCIAL PARTICIPATION UNDER THE LULA ADMINISTRATION

Once Luís Inácio Lula da Silva was elected president, he not only undertook to apply all that had been proposed in the Zero Hunger Program but also stated that fighting hunger would be a top priority of his administration. In his first act after his inauguration, he recreated the National Food and Nutritional Security Council and took many other measures agreed upon before. The council was officially set up on January 30, 2003 with 59 members – 17 ministers of State and 42 civil society representatives<sup>1</sup>.

1. In its second mandate, initiated in 2007, after the 3rd National Conference on Food and Nutrition Security, the council had 57 members, 38 of whom were representatives of civil society and 19 were ministers of State.

The proposal that at least two-thirds of its members should be civil society representatives, as in the first Consea, was preserved. Likewise, the fact that its chair was a representative of civil society and that it convened within the premises of the Presidency of the Republic showed the importance attached to the participation of society in such a major program.

It should be observed that this format reflected the willingness of the new federal administration to implement its “Democratic-Participatory” project by creating not only Consea, but many other national councils for rights and public policies, as well as by supporting the holding of national conferences on different topics and sectors.

It is worthwhile examining and discussing the paths of Consea in the eight years of the Lula administration. A preliminary aspect to be considered is how to define it as a tool designed to promote close links between government and civil society in proposing guidelines for actions in the food and nutrition area. Understanding this definition is important, as it is a controversial point in discussions on the nature of the council, i.e. whether it should be a consultative or a deliberative council. In the decree that created Consea, it was defined as a consultative council in charge of advising the President of the Republic on policy-making matters and on defining guidelines to ensure the right to food. This is a different task than that of other councils, such as that of the National Health Council, which is a deliberative council. There are two main reasons why Consea was set up as a consultative council. The first one is that, because of their inter-sectoral nature, topics related to food and nutrition security must be addressed by policies applied to different sectors under the responsibility of different ministries and secretariats and must also be analyzed by other councils for suggestions on their specific aspects. For this reason, if Consea deliberates on and applies certain decisions, these may create conflicting and overlapping areas in the decisions of sectoral agencies. The second reason is that, as a body in charge of advising the president of the Republic, Consea should not be allowed to issue resolutions that are binding for him. That is, it issues reports or opinions on certain governmental actions, but does not have decision-making powers to set guidelines for the policy in question. The argument of those who criticize its deliberative nature is that, as a consultative

council, its political power is very limited. The counter-argument is that what actually defines its capacity to make its resolutions prevail is the political support it relies on in its positions and the consistency of its proposals, as the history of Consea shows. The resolutions of some deliberative councils are often not applied if they are not backed up by society in large mobilizations.

Having explained this point, we should now check the effectiveness of Consea in building and monitoring some of the public policies under its competency, paying attention to social participation processes and other processes they unleashed. Nothing more appropriate for starting this analysis than by considering the recovery of the process by which the federal government was led to create the Family Agriculture Food Acquisition Program (PAA). At the first meeting of Consea, right after its members were sworn in and when the Zero Hunger Program was also being launched, it was argued that as greater access to food was ensured to population groups which used to have limited access to it, it was also necessary to ensure greater food supply to prevent any potential shortage and resulting price hikes. Apart from this concern, it was also argued that poverty in rural areas is mainly experienced by family farmers facing severe difficulties to access credit and technical assistance and who lack the capacity to ensure a market for their produce. That is, the required additional supply to meet the increased demand for food generated by the Zero Hunger Program should be ensured by family farmers supported by public policies aimed at tackling and eliminating their difficulties. A working group composed of representatives of government and civil society was then set up within Consea to draw up a proposal for a Family Farming Harvest Plan contemplating the provision of credit, technical assistance and rural extension mechanisms to family farmers, as well as an insurance scheme for them, which eventually led to the creation of the PAA. The latter is seen by experts who have been studying it as the best example of a public policy truly based on an inter-sectoral approach, which is so recommended for food security, as it covers elements ranging from those involved in the food production stage up to its consumption by populations in greater need. Consea was not only the body in which the program was generated, but also a permanent forum for following up on and defining proposals to improve it.

Another program in whose advances Consea played an active role was the National School Meal Program (Pnae). In 2004, after plenary discussions on necessary measures to recover the program, the council suggested to the president of the Republic that the per capita amount allocated to meals served in primary schools should be increased, as it had not been raised in the ten preceding years. In response to Consea's request, president Lula began to take measures to raise that amount, which in 2010 had increased by 130 % in relation to 2004. Other schools (day-care centers, pre-schools, schools for young people and adults and for indigenous and *Quilombo* populations) also enjoyed gradual increases in the per capita amount transferred to them under the program, but the efforts made by Consea to improve it were not limited to increasing this amount. Considering the need to take measures to promote other improvements gradually, a working group was set up within the council, composed of members representing the government and society, which one year later presented a bill to turn the school meal program into a law proposing several innovations, among which its extension to upper secondary schools, increasing the program's audience from 36 to 48 million students; the compulsory requirement that family farmers should supply at least 30 % of all the food procured for the program in each municipality, ensuring a considerable market to these farmers; the requirement that healthy and nutritious food items should be included in the meals served in schools, among others. When the bill was analyzed at the National Congress, it was very difficult to pass it because of the resistance of some representatives and senators to the innovations contained in it. A mobilization coordinated by Consea played a key role in ensuring the passage of the bill in 2009, albeit with changes in its original text, which reduced the scope of the advances it contemplated for the program. While social participation was enhanced as a result of the actions of the national Consea, the same cannot be said yet in relation to what has been observed at the local level, where the municipal councils in charge of monitoring meals served in school are still facing many difficulties to play their social control role in city halls.

Consea's contributions to the *Bolsa Família* Program were also important. It presented many proposals to improve it, particularly in its coverage of indigenous and *Quilombo* communities. Surprisingly enough, however, one of the main gaps observed in

its actions had to do with the program's social control. For one to understand this gap, it is important to consider the previous experience of the so-called Local Managing Committees, which were linked at the national level through the Citizenship Education Network and were active in 2,132 municipalities until December 2003. Mostly made up of representatives of community organizations elected in general assemblies, these committees played a direct role in implementing the Food Card Program, one of the four cash transfer programs that were unified under the *Bolsa Família* program. Given the decentralizing nature of the *Bolsa Família* program, which assigned very specific responsibilities to the city halls, it became politically difficult to keep committees in operation with powers to intervene in the selection of new families to be covered by the program. The removal of these powers from the committees and the decision to turn them into monitoring bodies of the *Bolsa Família* program at local level jeopardized the experience, which failed to create a new mechanism to ensure the program's social control. The existence of two distinct situations, i.e. active social participation at the national level through Consea and precarious and fragile social participation at the local level, reveals the difficulties still being faced at this level, particularly in municipalities located at large distances from major metropolitan centers.

The One Million Cisterns Program (P1MC), derived from the Zero Hunger Program, is another initiative that confirms the integration experienced between the federal administration and civil society organizations. This program was completely built by civil society through the Semi-arid Articulation (*Articulação do Semiárido - ASA*), a network of over 700 organizations that are active in Brazil's semi-arid region. The project's proposal consists in building cisterns to capture rainwater at a low cost and in educating families in whose homes these cisterns are built to use water appropriately. The government recognized the importance of the program and began to support it more substantially, speeding up its implementation. Consea was an important forum for legitimizing the partnership between the government and ASA, evincing its capacity to strengthen initiatives of this kind.

However, it was not only by building, strengthening or improving programs that Consea confirmed its effectiveness in ensuring a new level of social participation. It also did so by developing

key strategic actions for setting up the national food and nutrition security system and policy.

For this purpose, a process that was already mentioned above and should precede other analyses to be made here was the holding of the second and third national conferences. The 2nd National Conference on Food and Nutrition Security, held in March 2004 in Olinda, was mainly intended to resume a process that had been interrupted ten years before, after the 1st Conference was held. During this period, social participation was frustrated, as was the flow of new ideas and proposals at both the local and national level. The feeling experienced by thousands of people who saw themselves as important actors in promoting desired changes in the field of food security was one of frustration. These ten years were marked by conflicting concepts and proposals not only between government and society, but also among those who expressed their opinions at the conferences, within governments and between different currents of thought in society. As the cycle of conferences was resumed, municipal and state conferences began to be held throughout Brazil, culminating in the national conference, in which participatory democracy was exercised, existing contradictions were exposed, and a majority could show their capacity to generate and legitimize proposals. This was confirmed by the conference's main resolution, which paved the way for consolidating a legal framework for food and nutrition security. This proposal emerged from the state-level conferences and took its final shape during the national conference. Its repercussions will be discussed below, in the section in which the process that resulted in the Food and Nutrition Security Organic Law (Losan) is described. Other guidelines defined during the 2nd Conference were used as the foundation for the work that would be carried out by Consea in the 2004-2007 period.

The 3rd National Conference was held in July 2007 in Fortaleza, as a natural continuation of the participatory process initiated by the Zero Hunger Program. Its main topic was *For sustainable development with food and nutrition sovereignty and security*. This topic was selected following the logic that a first stage had been completed, that of establishing a legal framework for food security, and that the model to be adopted for ensuring food security should then be discussed. However, the 3rd Conference placed greater

emphasis on issues related to building the food security system at the local and state levels. Despite the mismatch between what had been planned to be discussed and what was actually debated in it, the 3rd Conference stood out for the participation process it unleashed in the states. Major state-level conferences were held. States in which mobilization around the topic was incipient, such as Roraima, were surprised with society's response to the call of the conference. Ethnic groups held events of their own and built a new agenda with remarkable contributions to food security. The national event of the 3rd Conference reflected all this diversity and the power emanating from it. And it afforded a learning opportunity for one to extract, from a living participation process, contents that expressed this collective will.

Another process that confirmed social participation as a key element of the conferences was the one that generated the Losan law. It was mentioned above that the idea of giving priority to consolidating the Food and Nutrition Security Policy as a State policy came from the state-level conferences held between late 2003 and early 2004. After the conference, the national Consea established a working group made up of civil society and government representatives to draw up a food and nutrition security bill. Almost one year later, the proposed bill was presented and approved in a plenary meeting of Consea and referred to the Presidency of the Republic for adjustments and submission to the National Congress. Throughout this process, the text preserved all the key elements that had been approved by Consea. Once the bill was submitted to the National Congress, it was quickly analyzed and passed as a result of Consea's active involvement in the process in behalf of civil society and of the decisive participation of the minister of Social Development and Hunger Combat, congressional aides and congresspersons themselves. It was Consea's first experience in drawing up, negotiating and securing the passage of a bill. Also in this case, civil society participation through signed petitions, teleconferences, events held at the National Congress and public hearings was decisive.

Three years later, in the second half of 2009 and early in 2010, another important process for Consea took place, that of securing the passage of a Constitutional Amendment Bill (PEC) to ensure access to food as a human right. At the initiative of a representative

who leads the parliamentary front for food and nutrition security at the National Congress, pressure was resumed for the Chamber of Representatives to pass the Constitutional Amendment Bill, which had been approved by the Federal Senate six years before. The need to ensure the human right to food had been consolidated within the movement for food security and, for this reason, the call for the Constitutional Amendment Bill to be passed met with no resistance. Once again, society played a key role in pressing and persuading representatives to vote in favor of the bill through signed petitions, noisy demonstrations, publicity on the TV using celebrities and participation in public hearings.

Obviously, it is at local level that food and nutrition security programs and actions are carried out. For this reason, the relationship between the national Consea and state-level and municipal Conseas, when they exist, is fundamental. This relationship is difficult at times, given the diversity of situations faced by those Conseas, some of which are quite active while others are not. During the third mandate of the national Consea, a committee was set up composed of the presidents of the state-level Conseas to meet at two-month intervals and discuss food and nutrition security issues and solutions. Special mention should also be made of the importance of meetings of members of state Conseas sponsored by the national Consea, such as one for checking whether the guidelines agreed upon at the 3rd Conference were being complied with two years after it was held.

Mention should also be made of situations in which majority positions taken in the council do not prevail in governmental decisions. Suggestions made by Consea on necessary measures to be taken in relation to the production and consumption of transgenic food, to the use of pesticides in agriculture and to restrictions on the use of pesticides, as well as positions it took against incentives to agribusiness, did not lead the government to take measures or adopt new policies to reorient the hegemonic model of agriculture. Could it be that the pressure from society was not sufficiently strong to support these positions? Or is it possible that these are areas in which society is not allowed to interfere?

While the experience of Consea is the main element being analyzed here, it should not be forgotten that the Zero Hunger Program stimulated many other forms of social participation. It put

actions against hunger back in the governmental agenda as a priority and, as a result, it raised the debate on a Food and Nutrition Security Policy for Brazil to a higher level. Those who worked and organized themselves around these topics saw the possibilities for achieving their objectives increase dramatically.

After the Zero Hunger Program was implemented, efforts were made to resume a campaign similar to one launched in the previous decade to mobilize society at large around actions to donate food to those in greater need. The difference was that the food that was collected was usually taken to a direct or indirect governmental agency to be distributed by it. Initially, the results were very positive, but little by little the campaign lost momentum. At this point, it is important to raise an issue related to something that was already mentioned above. In the 1990s, when the Campaign against Hunger was launched, society's drive to contribute to mitigate the hunger problem at its own initiative was based on its skepticism and disbelief that the State would take on this responsibility. Although the campaign was successful in its mobilizing capacity, hunger and extreme poverty were not eliminated. This fact renewed the conviction of various social organizations that the right to food could only be ensured through appropriate public policies. It also led philanthropic initiatives and direct actions of society against hunger to lose momentum. Once the Zero Hunger Program began to be implemented and it became clear that, for the first time, Brazil could rely on a set of public policies focused on addressing the hunger problem, it was seen that the Brazilian State was provided with fairly appropriate mechanisms to implement a Food Security Policy (of which social participation was a key component) and the drive for philanthropic initiatives began to lose momentum<sup>2</sup>.

At the same time, the actions unleashed by the Zero Hunger Program increased social participation and led to major political advances, apart from those ensured by the establishment of Consea and the holding of the conferences. One example is the stimulus given by the Family Agriculture Food Acquisition Program (PAA) to setting up and strengthening farmers' cooperatives

2. One of the changes brought about by the Zero Hunger Program was the decision made by the Citizens' Action movement in 2006 to replace a campaign called *Christmas without Hunger* with another one called *Christmas without Hunger of Dreams*, which was launched to identify families facing extreme poverty that were still not beneficiaries of the *Bolsa Família* Program.

and associations through the action of the National Food Supply Company (Conab). Another example is the One million of Cisterns Program (P1MC), which was designed by a large network of organizations called Semi-arid Articulation (ASA) and became a major program due to the large volume of public funds that began to be allocated to it. It should be mentioned that this program is implemented by social organizations and the importance it assumed with the support from the government raised ASA to the status of one of the most important networks in the field of food sovereignty and security.

The Zero Hunger Program also made it possible for the Citizenship Education Network (Recid) to be established, involving different social actors, organizations and grassroots movements from all over Brazil. Established with the aim of providing citizenship-based education and promoting rights at large, the Recid network reinforced the social empowerment of vulnerable groups, the main audience of the Zero Hunger Program. Food security is a priority topic on the agenda of this network, which often acts in partnership with the Brazilian Forum on Food and Nutrition Sovereignty and Security (FBSSAN)<sup>3</sup>.

## LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Society's demand for greater participation in the design, control and participation in public policy-making processes is expected to continue. It was reported here that the growth observed in the public sphere in Brazil resulted from different factors, such as an increasing number of community associations, greater awareness of rights, and experimentations with different forms of relationship with the State, among many others. It is often argued, however, that social movements are becoming weaker and society's mobilization is losing momentum in Brazil. Although there have been cases in which no mobilization of society took place in response to situations that would have caused a strong reaction from the population in the past, generalizing this argument might not be correct. A better path to follow may be that of considering new participation means and forums, checking whether these

3. In 2009, during a national meeting held in Salvador, state of Bahia, the word "sovereignty" was added to the Forum's name.

new means and forums are being recognized as more effective for influencing policies, albeit not exclusively.

It should also be mentioned that countries such as Brazil, where representative democracy was consolidated after a long period of instability or no democratic participation whatsoever, can now expect to experience new advances within the limits imposed by representative democracy itself, based on the experience accumulated by society in participation mechanisms it has experimented with over the years.

For this reason, the process of building the Food and Nutrition Security system and policy is directly related to a larger process at the same time that it reinforces it based on the experience acquired with gains and achievements and on the awareness of limitations and great challenges yet to be addressed. Once again, using Consea as a benchmark, these limitations and challenges need to be discussed as possibilities for promoting new advances, as they are seen here.

Social participation in all its forms of expression is always the target of heavy criticism from those who feel threatened by the transforming power it can unleash. The same applies to public policy councils, which are often criticized based on the argument that they are forums in which lots of discussions are held with little practical effects. Consea has not been the target of such criticism so far, but it faces many difficulties to disseminate what it does and the results it achieved. Although it relies on the participation of important representatives of society, it should be more widely known and recognized by it. This is why effective communications are seen as a key means to strengthen it, to preserve what it has achieved, and to enable it to advance further.

The shortcomings of social policies, particularly the lack of sufficient budget funds to finance their programs and actions, continually generate a feeling of dissatisfaction among the social organizations represented in Consea that can rapidly turn into tension between them and the government. This situation is somehow unavoidable, given the different roles played by each party. The Zero Hunger Program generated great expectations in society and some people believed that it would produce results very rapidly. Given a heritage of economic instability and lack of funds, there were tensions in the council in the first two years of the new administration.

The fact that previous contracts with economic agents continued to be complied with gave the impression that the pledge to pay off the social debt would once again be postponed. The experience of Consea showed that situations such as these should be transparently addressed by the government and carefully assessed by the representatives of society, as they involve elements beyond the council's focus on food security.

This brings into play another subject in connection with which Consea has advanced a lot already but still requires further advances. Food and nutrition security is an inter-sectoral topic in its essence. However, the political culture prevailing in Brazil is sectoral in nature. The government framework is divided in sectors which compete for budget resources. Society is also organized in sectors. The broad spectrum of food and nutrition security includes representatives of production and farmers, of health care systems and their professionals, of education systems and their professionals, of consumption and consumers, of different population groups and of many other groups and people intent on defending their specific interests. However, the Food and Nutrition Security Policy must be comprehensively considered to be effective and feasible. Therefore, all these parties must understand and be convinced of the comprehensive nature of the policy and preserve it in the initiatives, actions and programs they propose. The inter-sectoral nature of the topic is what justifies the fact that Consea must be a body located in the Presidency of the Republic. However, making its civil society and government members think with an inter-sectoral perspective is not something that can be achieved overnight. It is a slow process, the appropriateness of which is confirmed by results. The progress made by Consea in furthering this perspective constitutes and will continue to constitute a relevant contribution to public policy-making in Brazil.

Members of councils of this kind must have political skills that some of them might not possess naturally. For these, participation in the council is a gradual learning process that also takes place in the government and in society. For the former, the most immediate feeling can be one that councils are an obstacle to be overcome in the process of implementing the policy, forcing legitimately elected governments to negotiate. For society, which during the long period

that preceded the Zero Hunger Program had very limited opportunities to participate in decision-making and social control forums and concentrated its efforts on making political accusations and staging protests, the challenge is to develop consistent and feasible proposals. In addition, it must have the required negotiating skills to secure gains for those it represents. This is another long and innovative process that challenges its participants to renew old practices and experience what participatory democracy is all about.

Finally, since Brazil is set to build a national food and nutrition security system, ensuring sound communications between different entities at the federal, state and municipal level is a must, apart from encouraging the slow to act and strengthening the weak. The problem is that because the Zero Hunger Program came from the federal government – as it should –, its pace of implementation is faster at the top of the pyramid than at its base, when anything is done at this level. The situation is no different between the federal Consea and the ones operating in the states, in the Federal District and in municipalities. In this case, disagreements are more frequent between state or municipal governments that reject the idea of having a Consea and the desire of society to have one. However, there are also situations, particularly in municipalities, where society's organization is still incipient and it is not capable of meeting the requirements set by the council. The efforts under way to create forums between the Conseas at the three levels seem to be the best path to follow to correct these disparities. But because establishing a Food and Nutrition Security System is a legal determination and, therefore, the result of a State policy, programs should be devised to make it compulsory for states or municipalities to set up these councils and ensure their actual operation.

No one can say that ensuring social participation in public policies is an easy task. This is a dynamic process marked by contradictions, as it involves different subjects and interests of a complex society facing complex problems. Despite all the difficulties reported here, however, the experience of Consea is very encouraging. It contributes to building a participatory democracy and confirms that the process of looking for common solutions, albeit difficult, is always more effective in its results and more appropriate for meeting social demands.

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## 11. CONSEA's PARTICIPATION IN BUILDING THE NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY SYSTEM AND POLICY

*Renato S. Maluf*

A National Food and Nutrition Security System (Sisan) and a National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (PNSAN) are being built in full swing in Brazil. Given that social participation in the System and Policy is an important element of this process, of which the National Food and Nutritional Security Council (Consea) is the highest expression, the information provided here reflects the joint efforts of the representatives of the federal administration and of civil society who make up the Council's membership.

The experience of participatory democracy in the field of food and nutrition security, as well as in other public policy areas, is a unique feature of the Brazilian process, with the usual limitations, tensions and contradictions of such participation. The forums in which it takes place play the role, among others, of giving visibility to different positions and conflicts within society and government and of building agreements, even if in specific cases, and proposals for public policies, apart from the role of preserving the autonomy of civil society organizations and the responsibilities of governments in this process.

The commitment of the Lula administration to ensuring access to food is expressed in the Zero Hunger Program. The forums established by the federal administration for this purpose, by recreating Consea as soon as it was inaugurated, were recognized and competently taken advantage of by the comprehensive and diversified social movement which for over 20 years has been making an intense effort to organize itself in Brazil to promote food sovereignty, food and nutrition security and the human right to food involving social organizations, networks and movements, public managers and researchers. During the two terms of president

Lula, the Council's operations were improved in terms of social representativeness and capacity to build a comprehensive public agenda with proposals for programs and actions. Visibility, technical competency and permanent actions to ensure interaction with governmental agencies and social organizations were essential for this purpose.

The establishment of an inter-sectoral National Food and Nutrition Security System and Policy with the participation of civil society in drawing up and monitoring their programs and actions reflects the conceptualization of food and nutrition security developed in Brazil, where it is seen as a strategic and permanent objective of public policies subordinated to the principles of the Human Right to Adequate Food (HRAF) and of Food Sovereignty. Apart from the establishment of Consea, this conceptualization process led the government to set up the Interministerial Food and Nutrition Security Chamber (Caisan). The establishment of these two bodies is provided for in the Food and Nutrition Security Organic Law (Losan – Law n. 11,346/2006). The food and nutrition security system and policy, addressed in this chapter, were built as a result of the joint actions of these two bodies.

The text below was organized in four sections. The first one provides a background and describes the concepts based on which the National Food and Nutrition Security System and Policy are being built in Brazil. The second section describes the features and guidelines of the National System and Policy. The third one addresses some aspects of the experience of joint actions of the State and society in promoting FNS. The last section indicates the main challenges faced for implementing the National Food and Nutrition Security System and Policy.

## BACKGROUND AND CONCEPTUAL REFERENCES

For over two decades, actions to build food and nutrition security (FNS) in Brazil have mobilized social organizations and movements, public managers and researchers, among other social actors. This recent mobilization process naturally inherited elements of actions implemented since the first half of the 20th century with the aim of ensuring access to food and nutrition to individuals, families and social groups in Brazil. Special mention

should be made of the contribution of Josué de Castro (1908-1973), a physician, sociologist, geographer and politician from the state of Pernambuco, during that period.

The National Food and Nutrition Security System and Policy being implemented today resulted from two events in the mid-1980s, one of which was more technical in nature and the other was more mobilization-oriented. The first one consisted in the drafting of a document called *Segurança Alimentar – proposta de uma política de combate à fome* (food security – a proposal for a policy to fight hunger) within the Ministry of Agriculture in 1985 which emphasized, particularly, social and economic considerations. The second event was the result of a social mobilization drive that led to the holding of the 1st National Conference on Food and Nutrition (CNAN) in 1986, during which it was decided that nutrition should be added to the conventional notion of food security (MALUF, 2007), among other things.

Both of them considered a proposal to build a National Food and Nutritional Security Council (Consea) to address the multiple aspects involved in food and nutrition security and to ensure the participation of civil society in drawing up, implementing and monitoring public policies in this field. As the country returned to democracy, criticisms against technocratic and authoritarian public policy-making became stronger, and the notion that public forums should involve more than government officials grew. The above-mentioned proposals also supported the idea of setting up a government agency to coordinate the process of defining and implementing actions and programs in the various sectors comprised by FNS (agriculture, food supply, land development, health care, food and nutrition, education, among others). The CNAN was the first body to propose the establishment of a National Food and Nutrition Security System, with repercussions at the state and municipal levels, which was implemented two decades later.

The first experience of Consea lasted for two years, 1993 and 1994, when it had little capacity to influence public policies. This experience was interrupted in 1995 and resumed in 2003. As is well-known, in Brazil as in many other parts of the world the 1990s were marked by a neoliberal hegemony that had a negative effect on social policies and on many food and nutrition programs. Nevertheless, that decade was also marked by the emergence of

family farming as a socio-political category and by the approval of a National Food and Nutrition Policy. Social mobilization as a force to induce actions against hunger and promote the right to food was also felt in a large national campaign “against hunger and extreme poverty and for life” led by Herbert de Souza, popularly known as *Betinho*, and in the 1st National Conference on Food Security, which was held in Brasília in 1994. Some municipal and state governments began to use FNS as a benchmark in their actions. Usually, however, social initiatives were very limited in their horizon.

The focus on promoting food and nutrition security in Brazil sees FNS as a strategic and permanent public policy goal, a feature that characterizes it as a key category to be taken into account in the process of defining options for Brazil’s development. As mentioned above, it comprises food and nutrition elements, apart from associating the inseparable aspects of the availability of goods (food security) and of the quality of these goods (food safety). FNS policies must be subordinated to the principles of the Human Right to Adequate Food (HRAF) and of Food Sovereignty. This means that these principles should guide the definition of development strategies for Brazil, as well as the design of public policies related to its objectives, implementation mechanisms, and monitoring and social control tools (MALUF, 2007).

The right to food comprises two undividable dimensions, namely: (a) the right not to suffer hunger and undernutrition and (b) the right to adequate food, whose realization the government has the duty to respect, protect, promote and provide for, apart from that of monitoring and assessing it and of ensuring its exibility (VALENTE, 2002). Food sovereignty, in turn, is related to the right of peoples to define their own policies and strategies for producing, distributing and consuming food. This benchmark has been used to foster sustainable family-based production models, smaller distances between food production and consumption, and appreciation for diverse food habits (MENEZES, 2001).

The links established between the principles of the human right to adequate food and of food sovereignty and the inter-sectoral nature of public actions and programs and of social participation are features that differentiate how the notion of “food security” is currently used by many governments, international organizations and the business sector.

The efforts made for the right to food to be used as a key element of food and nutrition security initiatives led to the establishment of a National Food and Nutrition Security System, in compliance with provisions of the FNS Organic Law (Law n. 11,346/2006). The Losan law created the National Food and Nutrition Security System (Sisan) and provided for the need of a National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (PNSAN) to ensure the human right to adequate food. This is the main national law addressing the topic, and it was prepared within Consea with broad participation of government and civil society representatives.

Although there are many mentions of the right to food in the Federal Constitution of 1988 – the right to life, to non-tolerance of discrimination in any form, to a minimum wage, to agrarian reform, to health care, to social assistance and to meals in schools –, it makes no explicit reference of this fundamental right. For this reason, Consea led a comprehensive and successful national campaign under the motto *Alimentação: um direito de todos* (food: a right of all people), with a significant participation of civil society organizations, of the three spheres of government, of celebrities, etc. This campaign led the National Congress to promulgate Constitutional Amendment n. 64/2010, which included the right to food in the list of social rights provided for in article 6 of the Constitution, such as the right to education, health care and housing, among others. This was done to ensure adequate food to the population at large as an obligation of the State through permanent policies involving the three spheres of government, as well as to secure the commitment of society to guarantee the realization of this right.

## NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY SYSTEM AND POLICY

This section will describe the main elements involved in building the National FNS System (Sisan) and corresponding national policy, as provided for in the Losan law. This process relies on the systemic approach to FNS under development in Brazil for the purpose of addressing the topic in all its complexity, including the need to adopt integrated actions. This approach also resulted from the accumulated experience in building public policy systems in other areas (health care, social work, etc.). Because it is a public

policy goal, the conceptual development of a systemic approach to FNS took place at the same time that it was adopted as a principle for organizing public actions. This approach allows for identifying relations of interdependence and mutual determination between factors that have a bearing on the food and nutrition status of individuals, families, social groups, regions or countries. At the same time, it seeks to enhance synergistic gains generated by the systemic relations between all the components of the system by institutionalizing and deepening links among them. A word of caution, however, is that the system consists in a set of elements that evolve with contradictions, that is, the systemic relations observed in the economic, social and political dynamics contain conflicting elements (BURLANDY et al., 2006).

The two elements that characterize a system – interdependence between their components and coordination mechanisms – are therefore fully appropriate for analyzing and promoting FNS. The systemic interdependence of the factors that condition FNS was taken into account in the inter-sectoral focus of FNS-related programs and actions and led to the implementation of integrated actions. As a result, in operational terms, FNS actions and programs give rise to interdependence flows ranging from integrated decisions involving more than one governmental sector and social organizations to the joint implementation of these actions and programs. That is, the proposed inter-sectoral approach can take the form of joint actions involving different governmental sectors, denoting efforts to develop closer relations between them, or of higher-level integrative actions, such as actions linking production and consumption (BURLANDY et al., 2006).

As for coordination mechanisms, we are interested in those resulting from exploring synergistic possibilities and other effects afforded by the interaction between the components of the respective system. This vision of coordination is associated with recovering the State's capacity to publicly regulate the food system, as opposed to increased regulation by private agents as promoted by neoliberal policies. The mechanisms for coordinating the Sisan took the form of the National FNS Council (Consea), a body directly in charge of advising the president of the Republic and a forum for social participation and control of public policies, and of the Inter-ministerial Food and Nutrition Security Chamber (Caisan), an inter-

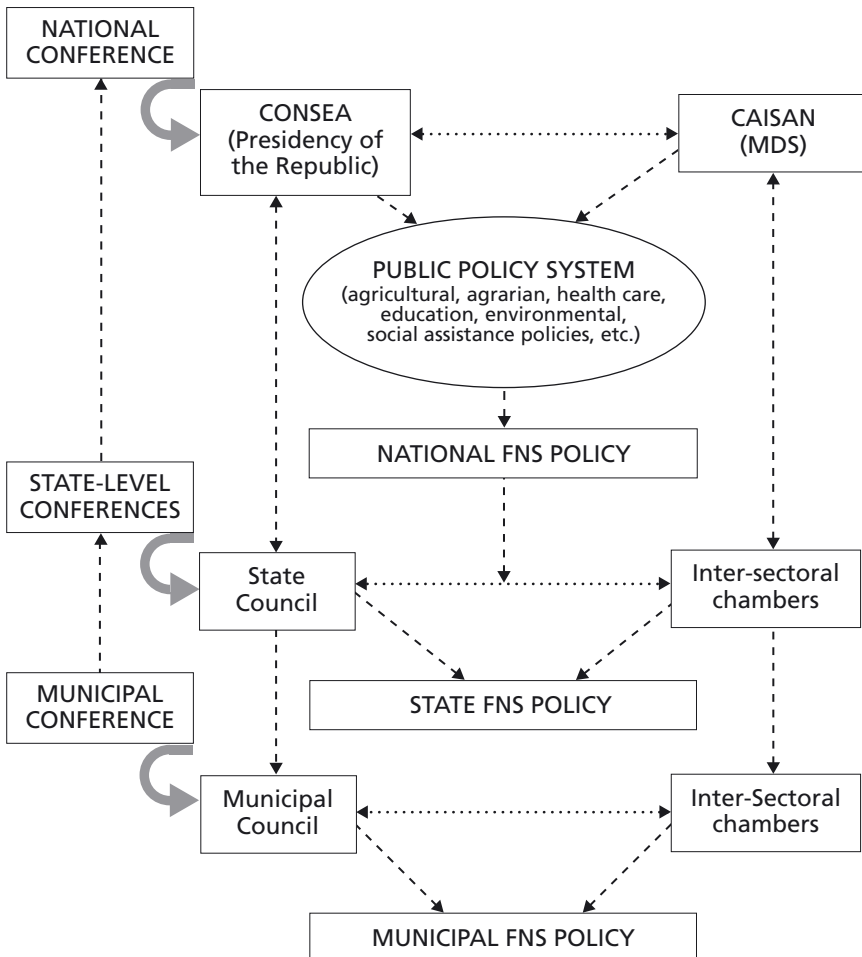
sectoral governmental body linked to the cabinet of the minister of Social Development and Hunger Combat.

The activities of Consea and Caisan are based on the deliberations of the National Conferences on Food and Nutrition Security, which are forums in which guidelines and priorities for the National Food Security Policy and Plan are proposed and the system is evaluated. In a process that involves thousands of people throughout the country, the national conferences are held at four-year intervals and are preceded by state, district and municipal conferences in which delegates are selected to attend the national conference and specific topics within their sphere of action are addressed. Three national conferences on food and nutrition security have been held so far (in 1994, 2004 and 2007), each of which mobilized about 2,000 people from all over the country, including civil society and government representatives.

Consea, in turn, is responsible for turning the deliberations of the national conferences into proposals for the national system and policy, which are then referred to Caisan for its perusal. One-third of the members of the Council are governmental representatives, including 19 ministers of State and special secretaries in charge of areas related to food and nutrition security: Social Development and Hunger Combat (in charge of the executive secretariat of the Council); Agriculture, Livestock and Supply; Aquiculture and Fisheries; Civil House; Cities; Science and Technology; Agrarian Development; Human Rights; Education; Finance; National Integration; Environment; Planning; Policies for Women; Promotion of Racial Equality; External Relations; Health; Secretariat General of the Presidency of the Republic; Labor and Employment.

The two-thirds of Consea members who represent civil society are chosen based on criteria approved at the National Conference on Food and Nutrition Security between 38 civil society organizations, including NGOs, networks, social movements, religious institutions and professional associations. The council also has observers representing similar federal councils, international organizations, international cooperation organizations and the Federal Prosecutor's Office. The council's chair is suggested in a plenary session from among its civil society representatives and nominated by the president of the Republic. The two last chairs of the council were members of the Brazilian Forum on Food and Nutrition Sovereignty and Security.

### Graph 1 – National Food and Nutrition Security System and Policy



The Sisan can be characterized as an open system because of its purpose to organize and monitor the public actions and policies of different governmental and non-governmental sectors, linking them up under a national FNS policy. Seen as the “policy of all policies,” the FNS policy is intended to suggest guidelines and propose integrated actions involving participants of other systems or decision-making forums. As a result, the Sisan enjoys little autonomy (self-sufficiency) in its field of action, as opposed to the systems that organize and implement specific policies or programs, which are almost invariably sectoral and financed with their own funds (even though they interact with other governmental sectors). This feature makes the functioning of Sisan system more complex, particularly of its coordinating mechanisms, in relation to other sectoral systems that manage programs of their own.

Therefore, the first of the two fundamental guidelines of Sisan is the *inter-sectoral nature of its actions, policies and programs*. The multiple aspects that have a bearing on the food and nutrition security of individuals, families, social groups and countries require integrated programs and coordinated actions involving various governmental sectors, as well as an approach beyond a sectoral focus on the part of civil society organizations. This requires the establishment of a National System that is also inter-sectoral and linked to the various public policy systems adopted in Brazil, such as in the health care, education, social assistance, agrarian and agricultural development, and environmental areas.

The second guideline refers to *social participation*, which is expressed in joint actions involving the State and civil society to overcome technocratic and centralized concepts applied to public policies. This guideline also reflects accumulated experiences in participatory democracy in the drawing up of policies in different areas in Brazil, which will be addressed below. Mention should be made of a set of social organizations, networks and movements that launched a significant number of initiatives of their own and in interaction with governmental programs.

As mentioned before, preparing the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy is a responsibility attributed to Caisan – which is in charge of submitting a proposal for this purpose to the president of the Republic. This proposal is being jointly prepared with Consea, based on the deliberations of the 3rd National Conference

held in 2007. The same deliberations were used as a benchmark in a recent evaluation of actions carried out by the federal administration to build an FNS policy and system that resulted in an assessment document prepared by Caisan (CAISAN, 2009).

This document proposes that the national FNS policy that is being built should take into account the seven guidelines and respective main actions shown in the Chart below.

Because Brazil is a Federative Republic in which states and municipalities play an active role in both the implementation and financing of public policies, bodies and agencies similar to the federal ones must be reproduced at the state and municipal level. Councils have been set up in all the 26 states of the country and in the Federal District already, while the establishment of inter-sectoral coordination agencies by state governments is still incipient. At municipal level, councils are beginning to be set up. At this moment, they are available in about 600 of the 5,564 municipalities of Brazil. The proposal for a National Food and Nutrition Security Policy contemplates the involvement of state and municipal administrations based on agendas agreed upon at the national level that formalize the participation and adhesion of states and municipalities to the national FNS system and policy<sup>1</sup>.

As for the financing of the National FNS System and Policy, it should be associated with the objectives and guidelines of this policy to ensure the highest amount of funds possible to their programs. Two categories of expenses are involved in building FNS. The first one refers to maintaining and managing the elements of the system (conferences, councils, inter-sectoral agencies) and related activities in all governmental spheres. The second category refers to the financing of public programs under the responsibility of the agencies in charge of implementing them. In relation to the latter, Consea is already developing a methodology for presenting proposals and monitoring the execution of programs that takes into account items typically included in an FNS budget, which will be shown below.

The monitoring and submission of proposals for inclusion in the Federal Budget focus on programs and actions contemplated in the Multi-Year Plan (PPA), constituting what could be referred

1. There are three fields in which state governments can play an active role in ensuring FNS, among others: implementation of state-level programs, apart from participation in federal programs; training in FNS; support to municipal actions and policies, including initiatives to link up municipal actions. The possibility and importance of municipal programs and actions in all FNS-related aspects should be highlighted.

**Chart 1 – FNS guidelines and actions of the federal administration**

| <b>Guidelines of the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy</b>                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Programs and actions of the federal government</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I. Fostering universal access to healthy and appropriate food habits, giving priority to families and people facing food and nutrition insecurity.                                                                             | Cash transfer; school meal program; workers' food program; public food and nutrition facilities; distribution of food baskets.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| II. Fostering food supply and structuring fair and decentralized systems based on an agroecological and sustainable approach to food production, extraction, processing and distribution.                                      | Credit support to family farmers; guaranteed differentiated prices; technical assistance and rural extension; agrarian reform; urban and peri-urban agriculture; supply; fisheries and aquiculture; solidarity-based economy.                                                                                                                              |
| III. Establishing permanent processes to promote food and nutrition education, research, knowledge production and training in food and nutrition sovereignty and security and in the human right to adequate and healthy food. | Food and nutrition education in public systems; appreciation for the Brazilian food culture; training in the human right to food and social mobilization to ensure FNS; training of food producers and handlers.                                                                                                                                           |
| IV. Fostering, expanding and coordinating food and nutrition security actions focused on traditional peoples and communities.                                                                                                  | Access to traditional territories and natural resources; productive inclusion and incentives to sustainable production schemes; indigenous food and nutrition; food distribution to specific population groups; differentiated assistance in FNS programs and actions.                                                                                     |
| V. Strengthening food and nutrition actions at all levels of the health care system in combination with other food and nutrition security policies.                                                                            | Sanitary surveillance to ensure the quality of food products; nutrition in basic health care; food and nutrition surveillance; health care in the Bolsa Família Program; promotion of adequate nourishment; prevention and control of nutritional deficiencies; structuring and implementation of food and nutrition actions in states and municipalities. |
| VI. Fostering universal access to quality water in sufficient quantity, giving priority to families facing water insecurity, and promoting access to water for family farmers to grow food.                                    | Structuring of the National Water Resources Management System; management and revitalization of watersheds; availability and access to water for food consumption and production; sanitation and water quality.                                                                                                                                            |
| VII. Supporting initiatives to promote food and nutrition sovereignty and security and the human right to adequate and healthy food internationally.                                                                           | International negotiations; South-South cooperation in FNS and agricultural development; international humanitarian assistance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

to as an “FNS budget.” The methodology that was adopted identified 149 actions initially distributed in 43 programs contemplated in the 2008-2011 PPA, grouped in 18 blocks of FNS-related topics. This approach led to the definition of a set of 65 priority actions distributed in 17 programs and comprising 15 topics: Agro-food supply; Access to food; Cash transfer; Structuring actions; Family farming – Harvest Plan and Food Acquisition Plan; School meal program; Healthy food habits; Biodiversity and traditional populations; Policy management (Sisan); Fisheries and aquaculture; Agrarian reform, land regularization and conservation units; FNS for black populations; FNS for indigenous peoples; FNS in the semi-arid region; Sanitary surveillance. By order of magnitude, the total amounts of funds of the so-called “FNS Budget” included in the 2005-2009 Annual Budget Laws were the following ones: R\$ 14 billion (2005); R\$ 14.6 billion (2006); R\$ 15.6 billion (2007); R\$ 18.9 billion (2008); R\$ 20.3 billion (2009).

The Council also developed a methodology to calculate indicators for monitoring the progressive realization of the human right to adequate food based on the following principles: broad social participation; focus on ensuring universal and indivisible rights; contribution to preserving the positive results achieved so far and to ensuring maximum use of available resources; accountability of the sectors making up the Sisan. Rights-based monitoring emphasizes population groups that are more vulnerable to FNS, while using data that reveal inequalities between populations and in the different dimensions involved. The resulting matrix comprises seven monitoring aspects, for each of which indicators and related policies are selected: a) food production; b) food availability; c) income/access to and spending with food; d) access to adequate food; e) health care and access to health services; f) education; g) public policies.

There is room for exploring the possibility of combining the two foci (indicators and budget) and information-producing mechanisms available in different governmental areas and research institutions in the form of a Sisan’s *Subsystem for indicators, budget and monitoring*. This would be a tool for public management and social control, two objectives that, in principle, might have tensions between them but do not exclude each other. Public managers must see it as a useful tool and civil society must have the possibility of demanding indicators that satisfy social control purposes. Anyway, the proposed sub-

system would be an element of the Sisan's monitoring mechanism, as the role of monitoring the human right to food is seen as one to be played by the State in a transparent fashion, making all the information thus generated available to all the system's members, including more vulnerable segments, respecting all treaties, laws and rules meant to protect and regulate human rights.

## STATE AND SOCIETY PROMOTING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

Social participation in formulating and following up on public policies in Brazil was strengthened after the country's new Federal Constitution was promulgated, in 1988. In the field of FNS, special mention was made here of the establishment of Consea in 1993, of the holding of the 1st National Conference on Food Security one year later, and of initiatives taken by states and municipalities to set up a few state and municipal Conseas. This policy practice was vigorously resumed in 2003, when Consea was reestablished at the federal level and various other councils were set up to ensure social participation involving representatives of government and society. At the same time, many democratic processes are taking place at the local level which culminate in the holding of large national conferences.

The exercise of participatory democracy, which is still in incipient stages, does not replace the so-called representative democracy, but is rather added to it in the process of building public policies in Brazil. At this moment, it is an important learning process for all those taking part in it. It requires enhanced capacity on the part of the representatives of society who take part in councils and conferences to present proposals. And it requires willingness on the part of government representatives to have their acts and initiatives exposed, discussed and criticized. Given the diversity of the interests they defend, both the representatives of society and of government participating in these forums see their divergences exposed and polarized not only between government and society, but also in their own elements.

The use of councils is not unique to the FNS area, as the idea of setting up Consea emerged from and was influenced by a more general trend toward establishing public policy councils in all areas and

even within governmental programs in Brazil. However, Consea has unique features in its composition and actions. The inter-sectoral focus of FNS requires that the Council is institutionally located in such a way as to ensure a sound dialogue between different governmental sectors and an equally diverse representation of all social sectors. This key understanding led it to be set up within the premises of the Presidency of the Republic and, in more general terms, it led state and municipal Conseas to be established within the cabinet of the head of the Executive Branch of the respective sphere of government (state governor or municipal mayor).

In addition, based on a representation criterion meant to make up for the unequal relationship between the State and civil society organizations, a two-thirds majority of the members of the national Consea are civil society representatives and one-third are representatives of different governmental sectors. This majority percentage was defined based on previous experiences, but it must be admitted that no clear reason was provided for it. Equally significant and unique is the fact that the chair of the Council is selected from among its civil society representatives – a procedure that was also adopted by other councils – while its secretary-general is chosen by the ministry in charge of most actions in the field of FNS, namely, the Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Combat.

Consea was set up as a council with the mandate of advising the president of the Republic, meaning that its deliberations generate proposals that are not mandatory for the Executive Branch. One can easily imagine how views on this delicate issue can be conflicting, for which reason addressing it is a must. My argument is that the by-laws of the consultative council express “the cost of an inter-sectoral approach” at the current stage of the FNS institutional framework in Brazil. Any change toward turning the deliberations of a council with the above-mentioned features into mandatory requirements depends on advances in this institutional framework, starting with a redefinition of the government framework to accommodate inter-sectoral objectives. Such a redefinition would require, among other things, the establishment of coordinating mechanisms between the different forums that deliberate on programs and their corresponding actions and a revision of the criteria applied to Consea’s composition and to the procedures adopted for selecting its members.

Let us take a better look at this important issue. The inter-sectoral approach resulted in the inclusion in Consea of a significant percentage of governmental sectors represented by their respective Ministries. More than its Ministries, a National Food and Nutrition Security Policy would involve a considerable percentage of the programs and actions of a government, which have their own deliberative forums that almost invariably involve social participation in the form of sectoral public policy councils. Turning the deliberations of Consea into mandatory requirements would constitute a questionable precedent for other equally legitimate deliberative forums, some of which are more experienced and mature institutionally. As for the procedures for consulting and suggesting civil society representatives to be members of Consea, they are being improved with the aim of lending greater social legitimacy and diversity to the different dimensions of FNS and social sectors and regions of Brazil. However, a degree of unavoidable arbitrariness still prevails in procedures that lack institutional legitimacy, fluidity and a more precise definition of the specific realm of FNS, if one can put it in those terms.

If these conceptual elements were not enough, a bit of realism would help one to understand that no government would subject itself to the deliberations of a Council with a two-thirds majority membership of civil society representatives and also presided over by a representative of civil society, with a considerable share of governmental sectors represented in it. To reject deliberations it may disapprove, the government could legitimately argue that its program passed the ballot-box test. Therefore, advances in an inter-sectoral system such as that of FNS can only be built in a complex dialogue and negotiation process between bodies of the different governmental sectors involved which, it should be mentioned, were established more as a result of the policy than of illusory formal solutions that, as I see it, are mistaken in the current scenario.

However, Consea's capacity to influence public policies is not exclusively determined by its decision-making status. As a matter of fact, it is the contents, social base and political strength of its resolutions that determine whether its resolutions will prevail or not. For this purpose, the positions defended by the council must be significantly supported by society, as the existence of councils does not exclude social mobilization. On the contrary, experience

has shown that Conseas are more effective where the civil society represented in them is autonomously organized and there are strong social networks and movements. At the same time, the council must have refined negotiating skills, so as to come up with proposals that can be actually approved and applied.

After it was reestablished, Consea experienced many successes and it was forum in which the Family Agriculture Food Acquisition Program was built and a proposal for a specific Harvest Plan for family farming was launched. The council set up a working group composed of civil society and government representatives that drew up the bill of the Food and Nutrition Security Organic Law, negotiated the recovery of the per capita amount allocated to the school meal program with the president of the Republic, and took part in preparing a bill for a new and advanced law for this program. It also developed more detailed proposals for improving the *Bolsa Família* Program, some of which have been implemented. Some other proposals, however, were not implemented, such as proposals recommending greater precautions in the production and marketing of transgenic food products and the adoption of a national food supply policy consistent with FNS requirements.

In sum, food and nutrition security found a political platform in the Lula administration that made it possible for civil society and the federal government to dialogue and develop concerted actions in forums that give visibility to the topic and to different views on it, thus contributing to the definition of sound public policies. Consea led a mobilization process to resume discussions on a public FNS agenda for Brazil, a task that was facilitated by the visibility given to the topic by the federal administration and corresponding programs implemented in this area, the formulation and implementation of which are central elements of the council's working agenda.

Hybrid forums for discussions between the State and civil society such as Consea are not exactly partnership spaces, as tensions and conflicts are often experienced in them, implying the need for focused efforts to arrive at possible consensuses, even if sporadically. The council is also affected by the low participation of private enterprises and even of some social movements, but this doesn't mean that it has not won increasing recognition in the country.

As anticipated, advances in social participation in public policies are being observed in a scenario in which the State's key role

in ensuring the human right to food has been resumed. The Zero Hunger strategy evinces this fact, as it reverted the model that prevailed in the past, but not without opposition from the spokespeople for the interests of the élites. At the peak of the food crisis in Brazil, in the first half of 2008, the option for having an active State was once again put to the test, and the federal government came up with various initiatives. However, the presence of the State is still insufficient to address the structural causes of the crisis, which are linked to the mercantilization of food, as we will see below.

### FINAL OBSERVATIONS: CHALLENGES

Despite unquestionable advances observed in the social area in general and in the food and nutrition field in particular, Brazil still has a social debt to pay off that is inconsistent with its development level. The country still has a significant number of poor people, inequality levels among the highest ones in the world and millions of families still deprived of access to public programs, resulting in violations of their human right to adequate food on a daily basis. In addition, conservative sectors continue to try and weaken and criminalize social organizations and movements fighting for social justice, thus contributing to weaken democracy in Brazil.

In this final section, some of the challenges for promoting food and nutrition sovereignty and security and the human right to food in Brazil will be addressed.

### KEEPING THE PRIORITY AND EXPANDING THE FOCUS

We saw that facing hunger and promoting food and nutrition security have been some of the main actions of the Lula administration, with international repercussions as well. The decision of the president to give top priority to these objectives, reestablishing Consea in his first normative act, issued in 2003, and setting it up within the premises of the Presidency of the Republic, gave visibility to, enhanced the mobilizing capacity of, and increased the scope of inter-sectoral actions. At the current stage of this process, special mention should be made of a proposal for president Lula to issue a decree establishing the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy before the end of his administration.

As for the establishment of the National FNS System, efforts must continue to be made to ensure the commitment of state and municipal governments to promoting FNS supported by the passage, by the National Congress, of Constitutional Amendment n. 64/2010, which included the right to food in the list of social rights provided for in the Federal Constitution. This significant achievement should be followed by the establishment, strengthening and assurance of mechanisms to actually enforce the human right to adequate food in coordination with the system through which public human rights policies are implemented in Brazil, fostering a culture of respect for these rights in the country.

Today, Brazil is provided with a comprehensive set of social policies than can promote regular access to food for the poorest segments of its population. Much has been achieved in terms of promoting the production capacity of family farmers. The school meal program has been clearly improved. However, under the pressure of the urgency attached to other topics on the government agenda, these and other successes should not lessen the priority given to a topic which, apart from requiring permanent vigilance to prevent it from relapsing, involves many areas that are yet to be addressed, as we will see below.

Supported by various social networks and organizations, Consea has been working to turn the *right to adequate and healthy food* into a benchmark for mobilizing society and guiding public programs and actions beyond those intended to fight hunger, which is done preserving existing tools. This benchmark contemplates sustainable ways of producing and consuming food and of enhancing appreciation for cultural diversity, for the diversity of natural resources and for the right to a dignified and healthy life. Such a perspective for action implies the need to mobilize and link up a broad range of governmental sectors and society with the backing of the Presidency of the Republic, which is a hard objective for a sectoral council to ensure.

This is why it is a must to preserve the status gained by Consea in terms of recognition and legitimacy as a forum for receiving and mediating demands from both society and government, which often extrapolate the specific realm of food security. Ensuring the legal and institutional status of Consea and Caisan under the next federal administrations, preserving the visibility of the National

Food and Nutrition Security Policy and System on the Brazilian public agenda, constitutes a continuity requirement.

### **SYSTEMIC ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THE FOOD AND ECONOMIC CRISES**

As we know, the world experienced and still is, to a certain extent, experiencing a critical moment that has affected the human right to adequate food of a large percentage of its population as a result of the repercussions of the recent international food price hikes and economic-financial crisis that ended up obfuscating the debate on it. The number of hungry people in the world has once again risen, revealing the fragility of international commitments to reduce hunger significantly.

In a diagnosis carried out by Consea, it was indicated that these food price hikes express, particularly, a gap between world food supply and demand, as they reveal a crisis in the global food production and consumption model that jeopardizes food and nutrition sovereignty and security and the right to food and affect initiatives to ensure the social inclusion of a significant percentage of needy populations. In addition, the systemic nature of the food crisis can be perceived in its interfaces with the economic, environmental and energy crises, particularly in the interconnected responses that they require.

In relation to the food system, the way the world food production is organized, the terms of international agreements, and the increasing power of large corporations to determine production and consumption patterns are being questioned. Food mercantilization has increased the flow of speculative capital to agricultural markets, giving rise to a scenario of increasing price instability and destabilizing production and supply systems in these markets. The option for trade liberalization and market deregulation reduced the State's regulatory power in most countries, depriving them of appropriate policy tools to deal with the impacts of the crisis.

The impacts of these crises in Brazil were lessened by the expansion of family farming production, supported by different public policies (Pronaf, PAA and the More Food Program), which accounts for about 70 % of all the food consumed in Brazil. Policies with an impact on access to food were added to these policies,

namely: continued increases in the minimum wage and immediate adjustments in the per capita cash transfers granted under the *Bolsa Família* program. It is a known fact today that measures to boost the domestic market attenuated the impacts of the economic crisis on the country. Measures must now be taken to address the situation still faced by extremely poor social groups deprived of basic rights, including the right to food, such as many indigenous peoples and people living in the streets.

Because it is a major global food exporter and supplier, Brazil is likely to benefit from the international conjuncture. However, the country's domestic and international responsibilities derived from the notoriety it acquired in this area require more than a mercantile response intended to take commercial advantage of the economic scenario. Consea has proposed the need to discuss the socio-environmental repercussions of the agricultural/livestock production model that sustains Brazil's status as an exporting country, as it is a pesticide-intensive, large-scale, and land- and wealth-concentrating model.

The council has come up with proposals to: (a) promote new foundations for the production and consumption model; (b) support agro-ecological family farming; (c) ensure the expansion a diversified food production which values agro-biodiversity; (d) strengthen regional cultures and food habits; and (e) ensure democratic access to the land (intensifying the national agrarian reform policy), to water, and to other natural resources. For the most part, these proposals can only be actually implemented if the State recovers its regulatory capacity and a supply policy is implemented to ensure increased access to quality food based on decentralized systems, a combination of different production- and consumption-related actions, and measures to address the ill effects of not eating well on one's health.

## BIOFUELS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Addressing the issue of the sustainability of biofuels – in its economic, social and environmental pillars – is a must both domestically and internationally. Consea has proposed that Brazil's international presence should take into account global food and nutrition security, energy security, and sustainable development needs. The Brazilian government believes that it is possible to avoid contradictions between food security and biofuel production, but the option

for the latter should be based on solid criteria, respecting the reality of each nation, striking a balance between social, economic and environmental dimensions, and not threatening food production.

In the Brazilian case, non-competition between food and energy crops is based on controlling the areas set apart for growing sugarcane for producing ethanol; labor relations in these areas must also be regulated. Mention should also be made of the social and environmental impacts of large-scale monoculture, as well as of the need to consider elements other than aggregate figures for the arable area available in the country (which suggest that there is enough space for all activities), so as to take into account territorial conflicts between sugarcane plantations and food crops.

It should be said that there are many environmental conflicts in Brazil, particularly conflicts resulting from tensions between the two above-mentioned agricultural models, which despite the interface between them represent different concepts in terms of economic organization and relationship with nature: family farming and agribusiness. This tension is also expressed in different proposals developed by Brazilian society to address climate change, both in what regards mitigation and adaptation measures in the context of unequal societies such as the Brazilian one. In December 2008, the Brazilian Government launched the National Policy and Plan on Climate Change. Consea has produced documents analyzing this policy and other issues in the light of food and nutrition sovereignty and security requirements. It can be said that there are great challenges to be faced in this area, as the need to discuss the impacts of global warming on food and nutrition sovereignty and security is still not an item on the country's public agenda.

## **BRAZIL IN THE INTERNATIONAL SCENARIO**

Finally, it should be mentioned that in the wake of the international notoriety acquired by president Lula and his administration, particularly in the above-mentioned areas, FNS-related programs and the experience of Consea have gained a lot of visibility and have been in high demand in cooperation arrangements with other countries and international organizations. This notoriety should be taken advantage of to establish effective cooperation tools to ensure the human right to adequate food and to food and nutrition

sovereignty and security worldwide. Even international assistance actions should promote a multidisciplinary and participatory coordination dynamic between government agencies and civil society. At the same time, Brazil's international actions should support efforts to build a global food and nutrition security governance system based on the principles of the human right to adequate food, social participation, common but differentiated responsibility, precaution and respect for multilateralism.

Despite having contributed to many initiatives under way, the engagement of Brazil's foreign policy in addressing hunger and ensuring food and nutrition security globally has been based on supporting the notion that initiatives in this area should be developed within multilateral organizations, particularly within the FAO. Despite recognizing the importance of the FAO, the Brazilian Government and many other social organizations and Consea itself believe that this is a timely moment to reform that international agency, similarly to what was done with its Committee on Global Food Security. For the FAO to be legitimized as the main locus of the UN system to discuss FNS and develop proposals in this area, it must, similarly to Consea, operate on a participatory basis and include civil society in its deliberations, apart from addressing a wider range of topics, including structural issues such as the right to land and to the resources of agro-biodiversity and the need to strengthen multilateral global governance mechanisms to tackle the systemic components of the food crisis. It must also promote mechanisms to follow up on the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD-FAO) held in Porto Alegre in 2006.

With respect to the agricultural trade negotiations being held within the World Trade Organization (WTO), in which Brazil plays a prominent role, Consea developed proposals that take into account considerations on food and nutrition sovereignty and security and on the human right to food, despite the limitations imposed by the format and orientation of negotiation rounds sponsored by the WTO. The council proposed that the needs of developing countries, particularly in terms of food security and rural development, should be addressed in all negotiations held within the WTO, that an appropriate number of "special products" should be defined based on food security and rural development needs, and that special safeguard mechanisms should be developed.

It was also proposed that special emphasis should be placed on regional integration, with emphasis on an Expanded Mercosur. The recent international food crisis showed that, despite being large agricultural exporters, countries located in the Mercosur region are significantly exposed to the effects of such crises. For this reason, the need to develop a regional FNS strategy has drawn the attention of governments, senior public managers, farmers' organizations and social networks dealing with different FNS-related issues. Social mobilization is sought around the human right to adequate food and food and nutrition sovereignty and security in each country and in the bloc as a whole. For this purpose, national and regional social participation forums must be established or strengthened to draw up, implement and monitor food and nutrition sovereignty and security policies, including a regional forum to support the above-mentioned social participation.

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## 12. NEW AND OLD CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY<sup>1</sup>

*Maya Takagi*  
*José Graziano da Silva*

### SUMMARY

FAO statistics on hunger show that it will not be possible to put an end to hunger in the near future and that the goal announced 13 years ago is becoming more distant. In 1996, the goal of reducing hunger by half by 2015 was announced. Agreed upon during the World Food Summit, this goal was reaffirmed in the UN Millennium Development Goals in 2000. In 2009, it was necessary to reinforce this commitment in the 3rd World Summit, held in Rome, which ended without securing major advances in relation to the previous summit.

Agricultural production has increased in an unprecedented way, countries have freed up their trade, knowledge and technology have evolved, social policies have become more comprehensive and complex, and life expectancy has increased as a natural result of better living conditions.

As indicated back in the past century, the origin of the problem lies in the high inequality observed in access to food and income distribution between countries and within each country.

What this means is that despite an increasing food production, the world is still far from getting rid of its most elementary scourge: lack of access to food to ensure a dignified life to all its population.

A question should be asked at this point: are we facing new challenges or the same ones faced in the last century? This is the question that this article seeks to answer. This article is organized in four chapters: in the first one, the most recent data on hunger

1. Text presented at the 7th Latin American Congress on Rural Sociology held in Porto de Galinhas, state of Pernambuco, Brazil, in 2010.

in the world will be addressed; in the second one, old challenges faced up till the beginning of the 21st century will be reviewed and new challenges will be discussed. In the third chapter, the most recent policies adopted in Brazil to tackle the hunger problem will be addressed. In a last chapter, we will make final considerations on issues emerging from policies already adopted.

## THE FIGURES: WHERE PEOPLE ARE FACING HUNGER

The higher hunger rates observed in recent years have not resulted only from the economic crisis that hit the world in 2008-2009, as those rates were rising before the crisis broke out. The causes mentioned in the report are related to high domestic food prices, low income and rising unemployment.

Food prices rose much more when the 2006-2008 food crisis broke out and they have not yet returned to their previous levels. The great international crisis experienced in 2008-2009 came on top of the food crisis and aggravated even more a scenario of unemployment and lack of income.

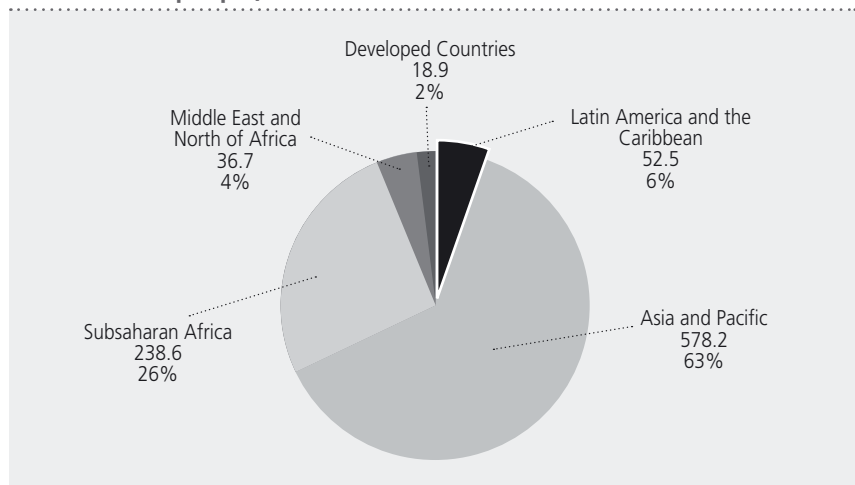
In regional terms, recent reports show that food insecurity has increased in all regions of the world, except in Latin America (between 1995-1997 and 2004-2006). It is particularly concentrated in the Asia and Pacific region, where 642 million people face hunger, and in Africa. In Subsaharan region alone, 265 million people suffer from hunger today. What these figures show is that 90 % of all people facing hunger today are concentrated in these two continents.

In quantitative terms, countries with the highest numbers of hungry people in these regions are the following ones: India, China and Indonesia (in Asia), and Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Nigeria and Kenya (in Subsaharan Africa).

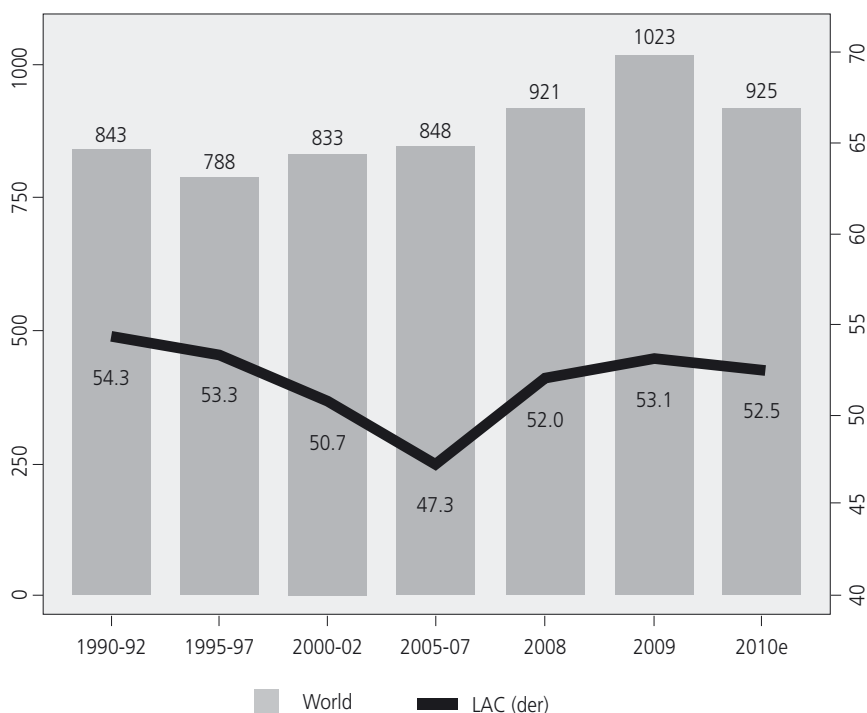
According to FAO estimates, the number of malnourished people in the world dropped from 1.02 billion in 2009 to 925 million in 2010. These new estimates indicate a reversion in the trend of rising hunger rates observed in the past 15 years. However, we should not forget that the world's malnourished population amounted to 843 million people in 1990-1992, i.e. 82 million less than the number estimated in 2010 (*see Graphs 1 and 2*).

This situation is frustrating, and this is why we have been are working on the "1billionhungry" project, the purpose of which

**Graph 1 – Hunger in the world, by region, in 2010 (millions of malnourished people)**



**Graph 2 – Evolution of hunger in the world and in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) between 1990-1992 and 2010 (millions of malnourished people)**



is collecting one million signatures in a signed petition to be delivered to national and international leaders asking them to give top priority to eradicating hunger in their political agendas.

## WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

During the preparatory experts' forum to the 3rd World Food Summit sponsored by the FAO in October 2009, challenges to be addressed to ensure food security on the planet in 2050 were identified.

The first challenge is that of whether resources (land, water, genetic resources) will be available to all the world's population, which is expected to hit the mark of 9.1 billion people by then.

The second one refers to challenges for agriculture in the face of climate change and of the new demand for biofuels.

The third challenge is related to investments in technology – with a focus on enhancing productivity and environmental protection – and in infrastructure to ensure the outflow of production.

The fourth challenge refers to implementing innovative public policies to ensure food security and fight hunger.

The fifth challenge is one to be faced by the Asian and African continents, on which most actions to eradicate hunger in the world are focused.

In relation to the first challenge, the indicators and scenarios discussed by the experts gathered by the FAO suggest that the world has all the necessary resources to feed its population in 2050: land, water and the potential for enhanced productivity. There are 4.2 billion hectares available to produce food. Today, 1.6 billion hectares are being used, but it is necessary to expand the road, production outflow, storage and education infrastructure.

We can see, therefore, that the problem lies in how resources are being distributed, as they are not being equally allocated in countries and regions and between social groups. This fact reinforces the conclusion that the food security problem is mainly one of access (low household income).

As for the second challenge, the indicators suggest that climate change will increase the variability of production between regions and will cause more extreme climatic events. Sub-Saharan Africa will be particularly affected by a drop in production. The issue is whether countries are prepared to address climate change and

crops are prepared to face it. For countries to be better prepared to do this, they must diversify their crops. This can be done by setting up more genetic banks and ensuring more sources for them. Today, they are incomplete and rely on limited resources. The main lesson is that no country or farmer can face climate change alone.

The third challenge is the need for technology. Lack of technology affects food security, considering that 90 % of the required increase in food production to supply the world in 2050 must be ensured by higher productivity. Since the generation of knowledge and technology is unequally distributed around the world, it is also a source of inequality to the detriment of poorer countries, particularly in Africa.

In this regard, technology transfer projects for African countries, such as those developed by the Brazilian Government through Embrapa (Agriculture/Livestock Research Corporation, a state enterprise) can go a long way to reduce this gap.

The fourth challenge lies in the need for new public policies. In this connection, Brazil is known for making innovative food security policies. But what is new in them?

The policy solutions devised 10 years ago were based on the territorial nature of hunger. The prevalence of higher levels of hunger in countries marked by ethnic conflicts suggested the need for peaceful solutions to these conflicts. A second set of solutions suggested the need for macroeconomic responses to hunger through long-term economic growth and, finally, for cash transfer policies.

The social protection policies mentioned by FAO in its 2009 report are organized in three groups: job and labor insurance policies (contributive retirement, unemployment insurance, health insurance); social protection nets (cash transfer and food subsidies) and sectoral policies (health care, educational, agricultural policies).

FAO's 2009 report expanded the list of social protection policies that can and should be applied immediately to help people already facing hunger. It supports policies combined in safety and social protection networks, including national food security programs, particularly for the most needy. Cash transfer and school meal programs linked to incentives to local food production are mentioned as examples. The report mentions other policies designed to increase small-scale agricultural production and produc-

tivity through the provision of more modern inputs, resources and technologies (modern seeds, fertilizers, equipment and rations). Higher productivity rates would help to increase the income of farmers and to reduce food prices for consumers as well.

Brazil is mentioned prominently in the report in a list of successful examples. Recently, in June 2010, president Lula was awarded the unprecedented Global Champion in the Battle Against Hunger prize by the UN World Food Program in recognition of policies implemented in Brazil and of an international initiative to strengthen and leverage the international fight against hunger.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICIES AGAINST HUNGER

Despite all the advances, important questions are yet to be answered in connection with new policies to eradicate hunger.

The first one is: why is hunger increasing in the world? For lack of resources? For lack of knowledge or political will to fight hunger? In the final panel of the preparatory experts' forum to the 3rd World Food Summit, in October 2009, Brazil was cited as a success case in fighting hunger, together with China. Considering what these countries have done, three conditions for success were identified: political stability – good governance; economic growth; and implementation of policies based on a twofold approach – investments to increase productivity combined with the provision of a social protection net, including cash transfers.

Another issue that was intensely discussed was the role played by agriculture in reducing hunger. Seventy-five per cent of the world's poor live in rural areas. In Latin America this figure is lower (40%). Therefore, agriculture has a role to play not only in food production, but also in generating income and preserving appropriate living conditions in rural areas. In the past, the development agenda failed to place enough emphasis on this role. Its focus was on macroeconomic adjustments, but not on adjustments in sectoral policies; on industrialization through economic liberalization and not on the industrialization of agriculture; on reducing poverty in rural areas through cash transfers rather than through autonomous increases in income; and on discouraging investments in agriculture due to low international prices.

However, recent crises and new demands (global food and financial crisis, productivity stagnation) created a new role for agriculture. At the present moment, development should not be based only on industrialization: it should be multidimensional. Agriculture has a major role to play in the current scenario of rising food and energy prices, climate change and demand for biofuels.

In addition, it has an important role to play in promoting development in poorer countries and reducing poverty by strengthening the role of small farmers and not focusing on large farmers only. However, the relation between a higher agricultural production and a higher income is not a direct relation. A study by Graziano da Silva, Gómez and Castañeda (2009) that analyzed the evolution of agriculture and rural poverty in Latin American countries concluded that agriculture in Latin America grew at an average rate of 4.8 % a year between 2003 and 2007. Rural poverty decreased, but it is still quite high. In 2007, 52 % of all people who lived in rural areas in Latin America were poor, against 29 % in urban areas. In absolute figures, these percentages amount to 63 million people in rural areas (34 million indigents) and 121 million individuals in urban areas (63 million indigents).

The increase observed in agricultural/livestock production was concentrated in a few regions, products and farmers with access to foreign markets. For this reason, one cannot establish a direct link between agricultural production and reductions in rural poverty.

The authors concluded that “agriculture as a way out of poverty needs to rely on a strong State provided with mechanisms to regulate imperfections in the labor market” (GRAZIANO DA SILVA; GÓMEZ; CASTAÑEDA, 2009, p. 334).

The focus should therefore be on increasing the income of small farmers. The way out of poverty would lie in investing in high-yield agriculture, in reducing farmers’ dependence on fertilizers, and in price and production guarantee mechanisms, combined or not with governmental cash transfer programs or subsidized credit.

A structural problem associated with food and agricultural input prices is the volatility of petroleum prices, which is hard to control. To reduce it, idle capacity is necessary, and few countries have it.

A last point to be mentioned here refers to the challenges faced by Africa and Asia. On these continents, small farmers ac-

count for most of the agricultural production. The main challenges lie in combining the necessary development of entrepreneurial agriculture with that of small farmers, so as not to increase prevailing social inequalities. Technology transfers and massive support to technological development to these continents in the agricultural area are key to ensuring this development.

Fundamentally, however, experience has shown that more than sectoral or specific policies, large-scale strategies to reduce inequalities in countries are required to eradicate hunger from the world, as they are the best means to ensure consistent and long-term results.

The economic and war catastrophes that led to a scenario of hunger and genocide in the first half of the 20th century, linked to the 1929 crisis and to the Second World War, lent increasing legitimacy to anti-cyclic State policies in the fiscal and monetary areas, turning them into integral elements of the economic theory and of government tools.

One of the main new developments resulting from this advance lies in the fact that actions against hunger and undernutrition took the form of permanent safeguards of society and ceased to be seen as emergency measures. Apart from preventing and attenuating the effects of those crises, they can take advantage of booming economic cycles, allowing for part of the gains derived from economic growth to be invested in policies intended to address the causes of poverty and hunger, such as by strengthening family farming.

The losses and damages caused by the world crisis in 2009 in Latin America and the Caribbean drew attention to the need to apply these guidelines to local economies more intensely. Although the region withstood the recent turbulence, worrying signs of vulnerability persist as compared to what happened in other critical periods, such as during the foreign debt crisis in the 1980s. They reveal how local links between development and advances observed in the post-war period, brought about by sustainable reductions in hunger and poverty indices, are fragile and, particularly, irregular.

Eclac anticipates a 5.2% growth rate in the region this year, higher than the one registered in previous crises (1994-1995; 2001-2004). However, the pace of this drop disguises a worrying asymmetry. While GDP in South America is likely to grow by 6% in average,

Central American economies will grow by less than half that rate (3.1 %). A worse situation is that faced by Caribbean countries, where some of the highest poverty rates in the world prevail and for which seven forecasts of negative GDP growth have been made. These countries will experience an economic growth of less than 1 %.

The weak dividing line between fragility and robustness – which reproduces itself within each country at varying degrees – helps one to understand another regional paradox. Three critical years, from 2006 to 2009, were sufficient to completely undermine solid achievements in reducing hunger in the previous 15 years, revealing the weakness of social inclusion initiatives in Latin American and Caribbean societies. The modest reduction of 600,000 expected in the number of people facing hunger in 2010 characterizes Latin America and the Caribbean as the only region in the world in which no significant reduction will be seen in hunger and undernutrition levels this year (FAO, 2010).

This setback and the region's heterogeneous growth are strictly linked to the very limited range of fiscal tools available in the region's poorest countries, which lack the capacity to take anti-cyclic measures to face the impacts of the crisis. The average tax load in Latin America and the Caribbean today amounts to 18 % of the regional GDP. That of the European Union amounts to almost 40 %. Worse than that, over half of this revenue comes from indirect taxes, which have regressive effects on an already perverse income structure.

Without a new fiscal pact, low budgets tend to reproduce inequality and aggravate this scenario of social exclusion. Guatemala provides a typical example of this budget tourniquet: the country is marked by the worst undernutrition index in Latin America and the lowest per capita social spending in the region (US\$ 350/ year). When the crisis broke out, the inevitable happened: similarly to what was observed in El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, Guatemala saw its public debt increase in 2009.

Finally, based on the Brazilian experience with the Zero Hunger strategy, some recommendations will be made below that can be useful for drawing up food security policies and programs in Latin America and other regions:

- Food insecurity, hunger and poverty are different concepts that require different types of actions from the public sector.

A more explicit reference to the concept of food insecurity and the notion of the human right to food allows us to better assess the need for specific policies, frameworks and laws. Programs against hunger should be based on the concept of food security and of the right to food; and they should be comprehensive, addressing elements related to production and access to food. They should also foster a healthy diet to fight undernutrition and other forms of subnutrition, such as those evinced by increasing overweight, obesity and diabetes and by other diseases associated with inadequate food habits.

- The experience of the Zero Hunger Program shows that, with sufficient political will, it is possible to secure a rapid and significant reduction in poverty and hunger levels. Eradicating hunger should be an objective of the government as a whole, and the President is the one who must give it priority. Governmental budgets must be subordinated to this objective, not the opposite. At the same time, the participation of civil society and private actors and the availability of an appropriate institutional framework are essential, considering that hunger is not only a statistical or biological phenomenon; it is also a political phenomenon, a consequence of a perverse development model that generates privileges and deprivation and tends to enhance inequalities. For this reason, community participation in drawing up, monitoring and supervising these programs brings about social inclusion, true citizenship rights, and effective social control in the future.
- It is financially feasible to reduce hunger in the short run: the *Bolsa Família* Program benefits 12 million families, one-fourth of Brazil's population, but it only requires investments of a little over 2 % of the federal budget and of only 0.4 % of GDP. At the same time, reducing hunger also seems to generate economic benefits for local development, particularly in economically depressed rural areas.
- In Latin America, where there is no consolidated tradition of civil organization and participation, it is vital that these policies are participatory and that they empower their participants. Strengthening bonds with the local community and promoting shared management mechanisms between public officials and civil society are key requirements, as mentioned above.

- Food security policies should be based on a multi-sectoral approach and should not be exclusively focused on agriculture or social assistance. They should include cash transfer mechanisms and other emergency aid mechanisms as a means to ensure access to food to poor families, apart from supporting family farming programs, health and nutrition monitoring systems, and local food supply arrangements. In the twofold approach to food security, one element supports the other and ensures that part of the increased demand for food created by cash transfer programs and other similar initiatives is met by small farmers. This win-win solution has not been implemented by many countries which concentrate their food security initiatives only on the agricultural intensification side of the equation.
- Mainly in the case of Latin America, it should be highlighted that for food security policies to produce lasting results they must necessarily be jointly implemented with comprehensive income distribution policies. Structural hunger and food insecurity are rooted in an unequal income structure and in its perpetuation and expansion. Therefore, despite their limited resources, the structural policies and development options available to governments should be mutually reinforced, otherwise they will not be able to address the root of the problem.
- Finally, the Zero Hunger Program and the efforts of the Brazilian Government to promote a more inclusive economic development model are being increasingly recognized as having contributed in very significant ways to Brazil's remarkable resilience to global food price hikes and the economic crisis. In a scenario of higher consumption, it was possible to preserve the demand for food and other goods and services. Despite the global credit tightening in 2008 and 2009, a greater availability of public credit for production and to finance acquisitions helped to keep economic activity going.
- Cash transfer and school meal programs also made it possible for poor families in Brazil to have an appropriate diet, even when GDP dropped temporarily, while additional credit lines for small farmers allowed them to continue to increase their production to supply the domestic market. A very important lesson is that when the government is provided with efficient

institutions to address chronic hunger and undernutrition, it is relatively easy to use them to ensure an appropriate and timely response to most crises. This ensures that poor people – who are usually the most vulnerable ones – will be protected from many potential risks.

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## 13. POVERTY REDUCTION: FROM 44 MILLION TO 29.6 MILLION PEOPLE

*Mauro Eduardo Del Grossi*

This chapter describes the evolution of poverty according to the poverty concept adopted by the Zero Hunger Program, with emphasis on family farming.

In the previous chapters, different public actions and policies implemented under the Zero Hunger Program were reported and their evolution since the program was launched, in 2003, was described in detail. Obviously, poverty levels are not exclusively determined by policies directly implemented under the Zero Hunger Program, but also by the Brazilian macroeconomic conditions. However, since its initial design stages, the program contemplated structural policies of a macroeconomic nature, such as job and income generation policies, universal social security, minimum income, agrarian reform and incentives to family farming.

One of the main merits of the program was the fact that it combined different public policies, making it impossible to assess the impact of a specific action or of a set of actions. Therefore, the impact of the Zero Hunger Program will not be evaluated in this chapter, but rather the evolution of poverty among the Brazilian population according to the methodology adopted by the program. As pointed out in the diagnostic and design phase of the Zero Hunger Program, poverty rates in Brazil provide a strong indicator of the food and nutrition security of the Brazilian population.

### DEFINITION OF THE POPULATION FACING FOOD INSECURITY

To estimate its audience, the Zero Hunger Program developed a methodology based on the poverty line (PL) as defined by the World Bank, of US\$ 1.00 a day, adapted to Brazilian conditions. To take into account the effect of different costs of living in distinct Brazilian regions, the poverty line was regionalized based on rural areas of the northeast region and on cost-of-living differentials ob-

served in metropolitan areas, non-metropolitan urban areas, and rural areas in the other Brazilian regions. The weighted average poverty line for the population of each region was R\$ 68.48 in 1999 figures, when this methodology was developed.

In addition to this regionalization exercise, the income of families indicating that part of the food they consumed came from their own agricultural production was adjusted. In total, the self-consumption percentage amounted to only 1.2 % of the declared income of all families, although it represents a proportion of 17.3 % of the families that declared to be “self-employed” in agricultural activities. Some items which account for “overhead costs,” such as rent and real estate installment payments, were deducted from the total household income of the families<sup>1</sup>.

Up till 2004, the National Household Sample Surveys (PNADs) carried out by the Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics (IBGE) did not cover rural areas in the states of Acre, Amazonas, Amapá, Pará, Roraima and Rondônia.

In 1999, the project estimated the number of poor people proportionally to the 2000 Demographic Census. Since 2004, the PNADs began to cover these states and for this work it used the percentage of poor people observed in 2004 to estimate their number in 2001-2003, thus preserving their comparability with the original methodology.

Another detail of the methodology adopted by the Zero Hunger Project is that it excluded all families of employers from among poor people, i.e. it was considered that the few families of employers with a per capita income below the poverty line – about 70,000 families in 1999 – were likely to have under-reported their income, for which reason they were included in the group of non-poor families.

Using this methodology, the number of people facing food insecurity was calculated at 44 million:

The data suggest a potential audience of 44.043 million people belonging to 9.324 million families (1999). This poor population accounts for 21.9 % of the families and for 27.8 % of the country's total population divided as follows: 19.1 % of the population of metropolitan regions, 25.5 % of the population of non-metropolitan urban areas, and 46.1 % of the population of rural areas. In absolute figures, the results are as follows: 9.003 million, 20.027 million and 15.012 million people for each area of residence (*Zero Hunger Project, 2001*, p. 74).

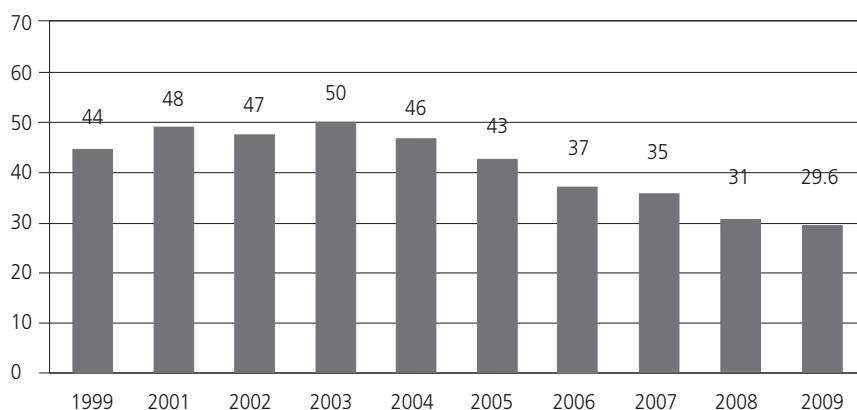
1. For a full description of the methodology, see TAKAGI, GRAZIANO DA SILVA and DEL GROSSI, 2001.

## EVOLUTION OF THE POVERTY LEVELS UNTIL 2009

Let us now check what happened to poverty after the Zero Hunger Program was launched, in 2003, using the program's original methodology. For this purpose, the same poverty line adopted by the 1999 National Household Sample Survey will be used, indexing the figures according to the INPC (National Consumer Price Index)<sup>2</sup>. The source of this information are the PNADs until the latest one available, carried out in 2009.

The results are shown in Graph 1: Brazil had 29.6 million people below the poverty line used by the Zero Hunger Program in 2009. The results also show that poverty continued to grow in Brazil until 2003, when the Zero Hunger Program began to be implemented. In 2003, the country was also facing a serious exchange-rate and balance-of-payments crisis inherited from past administrations which pushed unemployment rates up. However, this trend was reverted as of 2003, when poverty levels began to drop continuously and sharply. Altogether, over 20 million people were removed from poverty between 2003 and 2009.

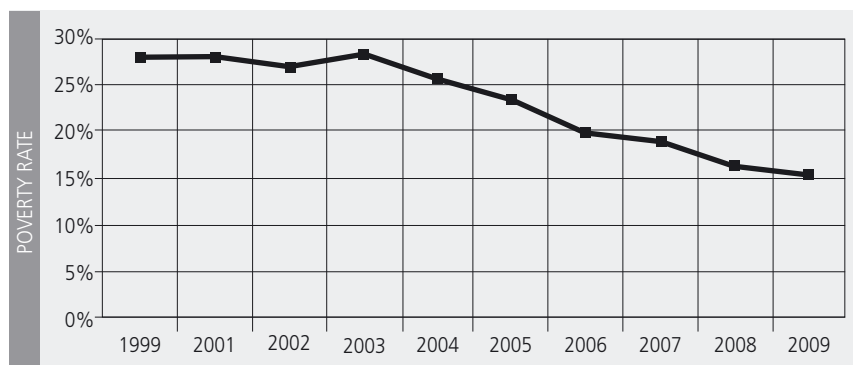
**Graph 1 – Number of poor people according to the criteria adopted by the Zero Hunger Program. Brazil, 1999-2009**



In proportional terms, the poverty rate rose from 27.8% in 1999 to 28.1% in 2003, and then it dropped sharply to 15.4% in 2009 (Graph 2).

2. For more details on the methodology, see DEL GROSSI, GRAZIANO DA SILVA and TAKAGI, 2001

**Graph 2 – Evolution of the poverty rate according to the criteria adopted by the Zero Hunger Program. Brazil, 1999-2009**



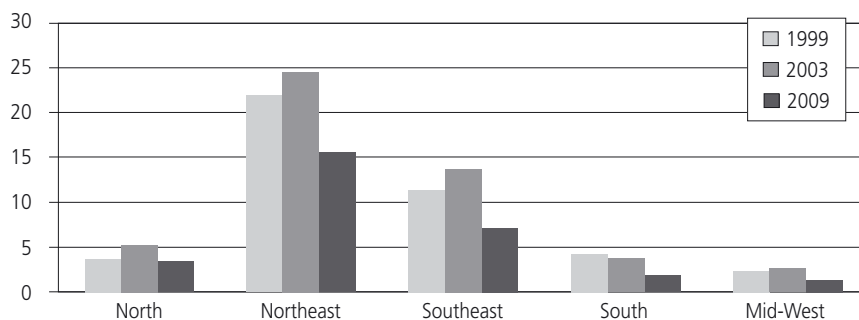
The number of poor people decreased more sharply in urban areas, where almost 10 million people were removed from poverty (Table 1), followed by metropolitan regions, where a reduction of 5.6 million people was observed, and rural areas, with a reduction of 5.1 million people. Proportionally, however, the greatest reductions in poverty rates took place in rural areas, where they declined by over 14 %.

**Table 1 – Evolution of poor people according to the criteria adopted by the Zero Hunger Program and location of the household. Brazil (thousand people)**

| Location     | 1999   |              | 2003   |              | 2009   |              | Variation 2003/2009 |              |
|--------------|--------|--------------|--------|--------------|--------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|
|              | People | Poverty rate | People | Poverty rate | People | Poverty rate | People              | Poverty rate |
| Metropolitan | 9.003  | 19.1%        | 12.208 | 22.0%        | 6.535  | 11.0%        | -5.673              | -8.1%        |
| Urban        | 20.027 | 25.5%        | 24.598 | 26.1%        | 14.864 | 14.4%        | -9.734              | -11.2%       |
| Rural        | 15.012 | 42.7%        | 13.299 | 45.4%        | 8.174  | 28.4%        | -5.125              | -14.4%       |
| Brazil       | 44.043 | 27.8%        | 50.105 | 28.1%        | 29.574 | 15.4%        | -20.531             | -12.4%       |

Source: DEL GROSSI, based on the PNADs/IBGE.

The northeast region was the one where the sharpest reduction in the number of poor people was observed: 9 million people were removed from poverty between 2003 and 2009 (Table 2). The southeast region ranked second, with 6.5 million people removed from poverty (Graph 3), particularly in metropolitan areas, where a reduction of almost 2.9 million people was registered.

**Graph 3 – Evolution of the poverty rate according to the criteria adopted by the Zero Hunger Program. Regions of Brazil, 1999-2009****Table 2 – Evolution of poor people according to the criteria adopted by the Zero Hunger Program and location of the household. Brazil (thousands of people and families)**

| Region           | Location      | 1999          |              | 2003          |               | 2009          |              | 2003 a 2009    |               |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
|                  |               | People        | Families     | People        | Families      | People        | Families     | People         | Families      |
| <b>North</b>     |               | <b>3,813</b>  | <b>725</b>   | <b>5,351</b>  | <b>1,029</b>  | <b>3,591</b>  | <b>741</b>   | <b>-1,760</b>  | <b>-289</b>   |
|                  | Metropolitan  | 285           | 57           | 565           | 122           | 351           | 83           | -214           | -39           |
|                  | Urban         | 2,394         | 453          | 3,066         | 598           | 2,104         | 442          | -962           | -156          |
|                  | Rural         | 1,133         | 216          | 1,721         | 310           | 1,136         | 216          | -584           | -93           |
| <b>Northeast</b> |               | <b>21,873</b> | <b>4,455</b> | <b>24,512</b> | <b>5,181</b>  | <b>15,491</b> | <b>3,562</b> | <b>-9,021</b>  | <b>-1,619</b> |
|                  | Metropolitan  | 2,981         | 639          | 3,934         | 902           | 2,157         | 538          | -1,777         | -364          |
|                  | Urban         | 9,440         | 2,013        | 12,044        | 2,600         | 7,768         | 1,796        | -4,275         | -804          |
|                  | Rural         | 9,452         | 1,803        | 8,533         | 1,680         | 5,566         | 1,228        | -2,968         | -451          |
| <b>Southeast</b> |               | <b>11,491</b> | <b>2,583</b> | <b>13,653</b> | <b>3,197</b>  | <b>7,077</b>  | <b>1,823</b> | <b>-6,576</b>  | <b>-1,374</b> |
|                  | Metropolitan  | 4,436         | 1,064        | 6,086         | 1,453         | 3,224         | 851          | -2,861         | -601          |
|                  | Urban         | 4,632         | 1,035        | 5,788         | 1,373         | 3,033         | 788          | -2,756         | -585          |
|                  | Rural         | 2,423         | 483          | 1,779         | 371           | 819           | 184          | -959           | -188          |
| <b>South</b>     |               | <b>4,402</b>  | <b>993</b>   | <b>3,803</b>  | <b>890</b>    | <b>1,986</b>  | <b>511</b>   | <b>-1,817</b>  | <b>-379</b>   |
|                  | Metropolitana | 897           | 213          | 1,081         | 249           | 545           | 142          | -536           | -107          |
|                  | Urbana        | 2,122         | 487          | 1,954         | 466           | 1,020         | 267          | -935           | -199          |
|                  | Rural         | 1,383         | 293          | 768           | 175           | 421           | 102          | -346           | -73           |
| <b>Mid-west</b>  |               | <b>2,463</b>  | <b>568</b>   | <b>2,786</b>  | <b>652</b>    | <b>1,429</b>  | <b>377</b>   | <b>-1,357</b>  | <b>-276</b>   |
|                  | Metropolitana | 403           | 94           | 542           | 130           | 275           | 73           | -268           | -57           |
|                  | Urbana        | 1,439         | 336          | 1,745         | 410           | 939           | 251          | -806           | -159          |
|                  | Rural         | 621           | 138          | 498           | 113           | 214           | 53           | -284           | -60           |
| <b>Brazil</b>    |               | <b>44,043</b> | <b>9,324</b> | <b>50,105</b> | <b>10,949</b> | <b>29,574</b> | <b>7,014</b> | <b>-20,531</b> | <b>-3,936</b> |
|                  | Metropolitan  | 9,003         | 2,067        | 12,208        | 2,855         | 6,552         | 1,687        | -5,657         | -1,168        |
|                  | Urban         | 20,027        | 4,324        | 24,598        | 5,446         | 14,864        | 3,544        | -9,734         | -1,902        |
|                  | Rural         | 15,012        | 2,933        | 13,299        | 2,648         | 8,157         | 1,783        | -5,141         | -865          |

Source: DEL GROSSI, based on the PNADs/IBGE.

## FAMILY FARMING

As mentioned in the preceding chapters, the Zero Hunger Program was organized around four axes: access to food products, strengthening of family farming, income generation, and social articulation, mobilization and control. The project was designed to increase local food production while providing incentives to family farmers, traditional suppliers of food to the poor population:

A key consideration of the Zero Hunger Project is the need to resume an agricultural policy in Brazil capable of providing true incentives to family farming with the aim of increasing food production and ensuring better protection to low-income farmers. This can be achieved through a set of policies that combine: agricultural income insurance; priority to domestic production, relying on imports only when there are harvest failures; incentives to public research to make it possible for small farmers to use appropriate technologies, in combination with an effective technical assistance policy; an effective credit policy linked to the development of marketing channels; incentives to setting up cooperatives to protect nature and the landscape, among other measures (*Zero Hunger Project*, p. 87).

Apart from implementing public policies intended to increase the purchasing power of the poorest population segments, it was necessary to break the vicious circle of hunger by providing incentives to family farming, which apart from producing basic food items can create local virtuous cycles in terms of occupation and income.

Some figures will now be presented<sup>3</sup> to show the importance and dimensions of family farming in Brazil. In 2006, the last Agriculture/Livestock Census carried out by IBGE indicated that there were 5,175,489 agricultural/livestock establishments in Brazil in that year, 4,367,902 of which were identified as belonging to family farmers<sup>4</sup>, meaning that they account for 84 % of all Brazilian agricultural/livestock establishments (Table 3). Despite their numerical importance, they occupy an area of a little over 80 million hectares, equivalent to 24 % of the area occupied by all establishments. Although they account for only 16 % of all establishments, non-family establishments occupy 76 % of the areas occupied by all of them.

3. Based on FRANÇA, DEL GROSSI and MARQUES, 2009.

4. According to the criteria of Law n. 11,326 of 2006, which defines the category of family farmers in Brazil.

**Table 3 – Characterization of agricultural/livestock establishments according to the classification of family farming provided for in Law n. 11,326. Brazil, 2006**

| Features                       | Family Farming |     | Non-Family Farming |     |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-----|--------------------|-----|
|                                | Value          | %   | Value              | %   |
| Number of establishments       | 4,367,902      | 84% | 807,587            | 16% |
| Area (million ha)              | 80.3           | 24% | 249.7              | 76% |
| Labor (million people)         | 12.3           | 74% | 4.2                | 26% |
| Production value (R\$ billion) | 54.4           | 38% | 89.5               | 62% |
| Revenue (R\$ billion)          | 41.3           | 34% | 80.5               | 66% |

Source: DEL GROSSI and MARQUES, 2010.

Almost three-fourths of all occupied people in rural areas (a little over 12 million people) work in family establishments, while only 4.2 million people work in non-family establishments. The significant use of labor in family establishments shows their importance in terms of generating occupations in rural areas.

Although they occupy only 24 % of the area, family establishments account for 38 % of the gross production value and for 34 % of all revenues in rural areas. Family farming generates R\$ 677/ha and non-family farming generates only R\$ 358/ha. Family farming is also more labor-intensive: it occupies more than 15 people per each 100 ha, while non-family farming occupies less than 2 people per 100 ha (DEL GROSSI and MARQUES, 2010, p. 16).

The indicators mentioned above indicate that family establishments make better and more intensive use of the land. Family farming is also a direct supplier of food items typically consumed in Brazil: it accounts for 87 % of all the cassava, 70 % of all the beans, 46 % of all the corn, 34 % of all the rice, 59 % of all the pork, 50 % of all the poultry, 30 % of all the beef and 58 % of all the milk produced in the country. The results show the strategic role played by family farming in guaranteeing food and nutrition security for the Brazilian population.

Considering the dimensions of family farming in the country, the need to involve it in the Zero Hunger Program was obvious. Let us now consider the evolution of public policies designed to strengthen family farming in Brazil.

## **NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF FAMILY FARMING (PRONAF)<sup>5</sup>**

This is the largest and most comprehensive action in support of family farmers in Brazil, through which agricultural and non-agricultural credit is granted to them at low interest rates. Since 2003, more than 10 million credit contracts were signed and R\$ 52 billion were made available for agricultural credit, accounting for 85% of all funds earmarked for the Pronaf since it was launched.

### **INCOME AND CLIMATE INSURANCE FOR FAMILY FARMING**

Most of the Pronaf operations are supported by the Price Guarantee Program for Family Agriculture (PGPAF), which ensures a discount in financing contracts proportionally to drops in prices during the harvest marketing season. This covers 35 products at the moment, and the discounts can be as high as R\$ 5,000 per farmer. Considering that the PGPAF is linked to marketing prices, this program is essentially an income guarantee program in credit operations involving family farmers. It has been applied to 500,000 contracts per harvest in average, granting an average discount of R\$ 1.2 thousand in Pronaf contracts.

Since the 2004-2005 harvest, losses caused by climatic events have been in turn covered by the Family Farming Insurance (Seaf), which apart from ensuring the settlement of loans granted under Pronaf also makes available an additional 65% of the net revenue expected from the undertaking in question. The scheme ensures that farmers will not become indebted and that they will also have an income to make ends meet until the following harvest. The insurance scheme also involves technical assistance to manage risks in family farming and the promotion of appropriate technologies, such as the adoption of preventive measures against adverse agro-climatic events. This climate insurance is only applied to agricultural defrayal contracts, protecting 600,000 contracts per harvest in average, but there are plans to extend it to investment contracts as well.

5. For more details, see the chapter by PERACI and BITTENCOURT.

## **FAMILY AGRICULTURE FOOD ACQUISITION PROGRAM (PAA)**

Implemented in 2003, this program has a twofold objective: stimulate food production by family farmers and the establishment of food stocks and schemes for distributing food to people facing food insecurity. The products are also distributed to schools, hospitals and charities.

## **HARVEST INSURANCE**

This is an action designed to protect farmers in the Brazilian semi-arid region when adverse climatic events occur. For this purpose, a fund (the Harvest Insurance Fund) was established with the participation of the federal, state and municipal governments which is relied upon when catastrophes caused by droughts or excessive rains hit and cause losses exceeding 50 % in corn, bean, cotton, rice and cassava crops of family farmers in the Brazilian semi-arid region. The Fund ensures a payment of R\$ 550.00 to each affected family as financial support until the next harvest.

## **OTHER POLICIES IN SUPPORT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Although they are not part of the Zero Hunger strategy, other policies intended to promote sustainable rural development are worth mentioning at this point. Among them, the following ones stand out for their timeliness and relevance:

### **AGRARIAN REFORM**

Despite Brazil's continental dimensions, inequalities in land distribution are a heritage of its territorial occupation model. The Gini index for land distribution among agricultural/livestock establishments amounted to 0.854 in 2006. Analyzing agricultural/livestock establishments by size, one sees that 47,000 (5 %) of them have areas of 1,000 ha or more and occupy 146 million hectares (44 % of the total area), while the establishments with less than 100 ha total 4.4 million (86 %) and occupy less than 71 million hectares (21 % of the total area). Agrarian reform policies were thus devised to reduce these disparities and strengthen family farming.

In the period between 2003 and 2009, 574,532 families were settled in over 47.7 million hectares under 3,386 projects that account for approximately 62 % of all settlements established in the past 39 years. For these results to be achieved, R\$ 7 billion were invested in the past seven years in buying land, apart from other investments.

A Land Credit policy is another element of the national agrarian reform plan, the purpose of which is granting long-term loans to family farmers for them to either buy land or increase their areas. Between 2003 and 2009, 74,000 families were granted loans amounting to R\$ 1.9 billion to buy 1.3 million hectares.

### **LEGAL LAND PROGRAM IN THE LEGAL AMAZON REGION**

Launched in June 2009, this program is aimed at regularizing the occupation of federal public lands located in the Legal Amazon region and at promoting territorial organization in the region. Land occupation in the Legal Amazon region is characterized by precarious or no legal recognition, giving rise to land conflicts often marked by violence. There were 58 million hectares (11 % of the Legal Amazon region) of federal land not set apart for any specific purpose in the region, with approximately 158,000 occupations to be regularized in these areas.

The implementation of the Legal Land Program was provided for in Law n. 11,952/2009, which simplified procedures for regularizing the occupation of federal land in the Legal Amazon region for areas with up to 1,500 hectares. Almost 4.5 million hectares of land occupied by more than 26,000 people have been regularized already in 261 municipalities. The first title deeds to land granted under the program have benefited 270 occupants already.

In addition to the need to regularize the situation of the farmers who occupy these areas, about 170 municipalities are located in urban areas fully included in non-regularized federal land, making it difficult to charge taxes and provide services to their dwellers. These areas will be transferred to the municipalities, which in turn will regularize the real property titles of their inhabitants.

### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND RURAL EXTENSION**

The provision of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension

(Ater) services is key for public policies to benefit communities and rural establishments. In the 1990s, the Rural Extension System was almost completely dismantled and was only preserved in some states of the country. In 2003, the technical assistance and rural extension policy was resumed, expanded and improved. Between 2003 and 2009, approximately R\$ 1.5 billion were invested to assist 2.5 million families. Currently, there are 548 organizations registered with the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA) that provide technical assistance and rural extension services with a staff of 23,000 technical experts in all the Brazilian states.

### THE “TERRITORIES OF CITIZENSHIP” PROGRAM<sup>6</sup>

Launched in February 2008, the Territories of Citizenship Program (PTC) is focused on addressing poverty in rural areas through a sustainable territorial development strategy. For this purpose, the program is based on plans developed in areas defined as territories and relies on the participation of civil society to try and integrate the actions of the federal administration and of state and municipal governments. In 2009, the program covered 120 territories in all the units of the federation, comprising 1,852 municipalities and 13.1 million people in rural areas, who account for 46 % of all the Brazilian rural population, 67 % of all people settled under the agrarian reform program, 66 % of all *Quilombo* communities, 52 % of all indigenous lands, 54 % of all fishermen and 46 % of all families of family farmers of Brazil. At federal level, the joint effort of agencies and organizations made it possible to structure, in 2009, a matrix of 200 governmental actions to be carried out in the 120 territories with funds amounting to R\$ 24.6 billion, including some of the actions contemplated in the Zero Hunger strategy mentioned above. In 2010, an additional R\$ 27 billion will be invested in these actions.

### EVOLUTION OF POVERTY IN RURAL AREAS

Considering the rural development policies mentioned above, let us now check the situation of rural families.

This text uses only two indicators: the poverty rate and the household income composition.

6. For more details, see the chapter by França.

It was mentioned above that over 5 million people were removed from poverty in rural areas, in which the most significant drop in poverty rates was observed. But was this poverty reduction homogeneous in all rural segments?

With the aim of understanding the dynamic of rural areas, the population living in rural areas and part of the urban population engaged in agricultural activities were considered<sup>7</sup>. For this purpose, economically active families were classified under the following categories:

- *Family farming*: comprises families engaged in an agricultural undertaking, whether they own land or not, living in an urban or rural area. According to the Pronaf rules, these families can hire up to two permanent employees.
- *Industrial farming*: families with access to an agricultural undertaking with three or more permanent employees living in an urban or rural area.
- *Non-rural agricultural families*: families of employers or self-employed people whose members are engaged in non-agricultural activities although they live in a rural area.
- *Rural wage-earners*: families that live off the labor of their members. For simplification purposes, both agricultural wage-earners (living in an urban or rural area) and non-agricultural wage-earners living in a rural area were considered.

The results of this classification can be seen in table 4. A significant poverty reduction was observed among the families of fam-

**Table 4 – Agricultural families or occupied rural families, according to their poverty status. Brazil (thousands of families or people)**

| Type of families                             | Number of people |       |            | Number of people |      |            |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------|-------|------------|------------------|------|------------|
|                                              | 2003             | 2009  | Difference | 2003             | 2009 | Difference |
| Family farming                               | 7,709            | 3,570 | -4,139     | 1,504            | 746  | -759       |
| Industrial farming                           | 0                | 0     |            | 0                | 0    |            |
| Non-agricultural rural families <sup>1</sup> | 998              | 575   | -423       | 198              | 129  | -69        |
| Rural wage-earners <sup>2</sup>              | 7,855            | 4,662 | -3,193     | 1,585            | 960  | -624       |

1. Includes families of employers and of self-employed, non-agricultural or pluriactive workers.

2. Includes agricultural and pluriactive families (in rural or urban areas) and non-agricultural families living in rural areas.

Note: does not include rural families in the states of Acre, Amazonas, Amapá, Pará, Rondônia and Roraima, which only began to be counted as of 2004.

7. Agricultural activities refer to the generic meaning of the term and include livestock, extractivism, forestry and fishing activities.

ily farmers: 759,000 of them were removed from poverty. In terms of number of people, this reduction amounted to over 4 million people, which represents a drop from 41 % to 24 % in this group's poverty rate. This is the occupational category for which the sharpest reduction in the number of poor people was registered.

The second category that experienced a significant drop in the number of poor was that of rural wage-earners, in which over 3 million people from 624,000 families were removed from poverty between 2003 and 2009. Despite a major reduction in the number of poor people in general, rural wage-earners account for the majority of poor people in Brazilian rural areas, with a little less than 1 million poor families, representing 20 % of all families of rural wage-earners.

When sources of income for the different types of families are broken down, a significant increase in labor income is observed (*Table 5*). In family farming, the average agricultural income increased by R\$ 107.00, representing a real gain of 17 %, and non-agricultural income grew by R\$ 102.00 in average (real gain of 43 %).

**Table 5 – Average monthly household income from agricultural and non-agricultural activities, according to the family type. Brazil (amounts in R\$ in September 2009)**

| Type of families                             | Average agricultural income |       |            | Average non-agricultural income |       |            | Average household income |        |            |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|------------|---------------------------------|-------|------------|--------------------------|--------|------------|
|                                              | 2003                        | 2009  | Difference | 2003                            | 2009  | Difference | 2003                     | 2009   | Difference |
| Family farming                               | 620                         | 727   | 17%        | 239                             | 341   | 43%        | 1,138                    | 1,499  | 32%        |
| Industrial farming                           | 7,528                       | 7,249 | -4%        | 1,213                           | 1,513 | 25%        | 9,737                    | 10,477 | 8%         |
| Non-agricultural rural families <sup>1</sup> | -                           | -     |            | 978                             | 1,172 | 20%        | 1,230                    | 1,526  | 24%        |
| Rural wage-earning families <sup>2</sup>     | 322                         | 396   | 23%        | 317                             | 460   | 45%        | 793                      | 1,094  | 38%        |

1. Includes families of employers and self-employed, non-agricultural or pluriactive workers.

2. Includes agricultural and pluriactive families (in rural or urban areas) and non-agricultural families living in rural areas.

Note: does not include rural families in the states of Acre, Amazonas, Amapá, Pará, Rondônia and Roraima, which only began to be counted as of 2004. Figures indexed by the INPC index.

Source: Figures of National Household Sample Surveys processed by the author.

The increase observed in agricultural and non-agricultural income accounted for 58 % of the total increase in the family farming income, i.e. the increase in incomes of all categories (labor income and governmental cash transfers – retirement pensions and Bolsa Família program) played a major role in promoting a significant reduction in poverty among family farmers, but labor income was the one that contributed the most to increasing the income of these farmers' families.

Table 5 also shows that both the agricultural (23 %) and non-agricultural (45 %) income of rural wage-earners increased in real terms. These two sources explain 72 % of the increase observed in the income of families of wage-earners, but because rural agricultural wages are very low historically, even the average increase of R\$ 74.00 in agricultural income and of R\$ 143.00 in non-agricultural income were not sufficient to remove more wage-earning families from poverty.

The fact that the labor income of rural families was the one that increased most shows that they experienced virtuous cycles of occupation, job and income generation. These results strongly suggest that the assumption of the Zero Hunger Program was correct: cash transfer programs such as the Bolsa Família program were important and played a major role in enhancing demand in local markets, boosting economies that were stagnated before.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This paper described the evolution of poverty and, consequently, of food and nutrition security according to the criteria adopted by the Zero Hunger Program. Between 2003 and 2009, over 20 million people were removed from poverty, particularly in rural areas, where 5 million people found a way out of it.

Since it was launched, in 2003, the program required intense efforts from the government to break the vicious circle of hunger and poverty. The figures for the different programs implemented over recent years showed that these efforts were continuous and consistent with their initial objectives.

The combination of different cash transfer policies (emergency policies) to boost local consuming markets and stable macroeconomic conditions ensured positive results, as observed in Brazil's rural areas.

In the family farming sector, over 4 million people have crossed the poverty line upward. Among rural wage-earners, 624,000 families were removed from poverty, but 17 % of the wage-earning families are still below the poverty line.

Among income sources, the income from agricultural and non-agricultural work was the one that accounted for most of the increase observed in the income of family farmers and rural wage-

earners. The support provided to family farming and local development, combined with cash transfers, generated virtuous cycles of income generation and assured citizenship rights locally. The increase observed in labor income confirms this positive performance.

Obviously, despite the advances registered since 2003, many challenges still remain, and perhaps the greatest one lies in the fact that 29.5 million people are still considered poor in Brazil.

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# 14. SUGGESTIONS FOR A FOOD SECURITY POLICY IN LATIN AMERICA

*José Graziano da Silva*

*Walter Belik*

*Maya Takagi*

## INTRODUCTION

In this text, we present a set of suggestions for drawing up a food security policy fundamentally based on its authors' experience in designing and implementing the Zero Hunger Program of the Brazilian federal administration<sup>1</sup>.

Food concerns are not a recent phenomenon in Latin American countries. Since the early colonization days, a big difference could be clearly perceived between countries referred to as exploitation colonies – such as Brazil and the remaining Latin American countries – and settlement colonies – such as the United States and Canada. In the first case, productive activities – basically agricultural, livestock and mining activities – were basically intended to supply foreign markets (Europe). Therefore, the international price of exported products determined the allocation of productive resources. When the price of a certain product rose, all the available resources were shifted to producing it. Inversely, when prices were low, particularly land and labor were shifted to secondary activities, such as food production. That was how the so-called hunger paradox was created “in exploitation colonies: the more wealth was generated, the more hunger and deprivation were experienced by workers, since most food products had to be imported.”

The modernization of agriculture/livestock activities in Latin America in the post-war period destroyed these identities for many

1. A first version of this text was requested by FAO's Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, Gustavo Gordillo, in July 2004 to be used as a sort of “manual” by technical experts in charge of implementing food security programs in countries of the region. The conclusions of this text were based on the results of the Seminar *Políticas de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutrición en América Latina*, which was held in the premises of the Institute of Economics of the University of Campinas (Unicamp) in 2003. The full texts presented in that seminar were organized by Belik (2004).

countries, among which those of an expanded Mercosur deserve special mention – particularly Chile, Brazil and Argentina – and of Central America, mainly Mexico. In those countries – and in almost all the other ones, albeit on a smaller scale – modern markets for food produced by small, medium and large modern farmers were created, as well as an agriindustry focused both on meeting domestic demand and on supplying foreign markets. Obviously, the intensity of this dynamic was not the same in all countries of the region, particularly in countries of the Andean Community (such as Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru), where domestic supply was still largely dependent on a *surplus economy*<sup>2</sup>, whose needs were met by small peasant farmers, and on imports, as Venezuela today.

It would not be a big mistake to say that, for the first group of the above-mentioned countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico), the dynamic of domestic supply through imports and surpluses of subsistence economies was interrupted once and for all. In these countries, a strong modern – or modernized, as some people prefer to refer to it – supply sector was established to meet domestic demand, the expansion of which is fundamentally determined by demand for agricultural/livestock products and not by the inelasticity of supply, i.e. today, the expansion of food production is limited by the insufficient demand of a major percentage of the population that lacks the purchasing power to buy the food it needs. Moreover: since the 1990s, a new industry began to be established in those countries focused on exporting fresh and high value-added agricultural/livestock products (such as, typically, Brazilian tropical fruits or Chilean salmon) and agroindustrial commodities (such as fruit juices, vegetal oils and processed meat from Argentina and Brazil). This new exporting industry boosted foreign trade in the region and has been playing a key role in attenuating the effects of the crisis caused by insufficient demand in domestic markets, which can be mainly attributed to the low income levels of the populations of these countries.

This is a new element of the debate on food security in Latin America: the existence of hunger in countries that have managed to remove their main agricultural supply bottlenecks through agriculture/livestock modernization policies. In other words, we can

2. In this regard, see the classical literature on subsistence agriculture and its role in supplying local markets.

say that hunger in these countries is not caused by high food prices or insufficient food production any longer, but mainly by the low purchasing power of their poorer workers and by high unemployment levels, particularly in urban areas.

We will now focus on presenting a food security proposal for this set of countries. This is not to say that less importance should be attached to food security programs in other Latin American countries, in the Andean Community, in Central America and in the Caribbean. For them, we believe that the FAO has already developed a solid set of policies linking actions against hunger to rural development and poverty reduction initiatives. The issue which in our opinion constitutes a new challenge for the FAO in Latin America is that of tackling the hunger problem in countries with a predominantly urban population, particularly in metropolitan regions where extreme poverty has been increasing due to high unemployment levels and rising informalization of the urban economy, as is the typical case in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico.

## THE FOOD SECURITY CONCEPT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

From the point of view of public policies, at least three different – albeit, in many ways, convergent – approaches to food security have been adopted, namely:

The first one is the “agricultural” approach, focused on supply. This approach began to be adopted in late 1950s and early 1960s, when the primary exporting model of Latin America began to be replaced by the import substitution model in some countries, leveraging industrial development and urbanization. The main concern that led to the adoption of this approach was the high price of food for urban populations due to the presence of many middle-men between surplus producers and urban consumers. The basic proposal was to revert this situation by modernizing wholesale (central supply facilities) and retail (supermarket chains) marketing channels at the same pace of modernization of agricultural/livestock production.

The second approach was based on the concern of public health care professionals with the nutrition of the population, particularly of the low income population. Here, hunger is seen as the link between diseases and poverty. Therefore, the measures pro-

posed under this approach involve actions ranging from prevention as the best medicine, without doing away with necessary emergency actions, to food distribution to specific groups (children, elderly people and low-income breastfeeding women). Although they suggest measures to ensure universal access to these items (such as addition of fluorite to drinking water, of micronutrients in flours, etc.), these proposals almost invariably lead actions to be focused on specific population groups among which nutritional deficiencies are more frequently detected.

Finally, a third, chronologically more recent approach is that of the human right to food. This approach was first referred to in international documents agreed upon within the UN and its sectoral organizations (mainly FAO, Unicef, WHO). This promising approach to food security is more comprehensive than previous approaches, as it is not limited to addressing food as a problem related to its physical availability only and involves cultural aspects and one's satisfaction (pleasure), i.e. the act of eating is not merely seen as a biological need or a work requirement any longer, but rather as something inherent in the life of human beings, respecting their habits and customs.

It should also be recalled that the food security concept is evolving and, more recently, some authors have been using the term food sovereignty and sustainability. Actually, the notion of food sovereignty emerged more strongly in debates on food security-related topics in 1996. During the World Food Summit, in a parallel forum of civil society that was also held in Rome, food sovereignty began to be claimed with great emphasis. This concept focuses on the food autonomy of countries and emphasizes the need to recover their food crops. It is also linked to the need to reduce these countries' dependence on imports, minimizing the effects of price fluctuations in the international market and allowing for more jobs to be generated in them. In sum, food sovereignty attaches great importance to preserving food habits and traditional agricultural practices. Food sustainability, in turn, involves concepts related to environmental preservation and non-use of pesticides and extensive monoculture.

However, conceptualizing and defining a specific scope for applying the expanded food sovereignty concept contained in this approach to the human right to food in the field of public policies is not an easy task, as will be discussed below.

### **BOX 1: Legal-institutional framework: the right to food and to food sovereignty (a right of the population and a duty of the State to ensure)**

In 1789, as a result of the French Revolution, the Universal Rights of Man were declared. Since then, jurists and constitutionalists have been discussing the scope of these rights and conflicts between them. More recently, food security gained a higher status and was compared to other rights of human beings provided for in resolutions of the UN Human Rights Committee itself.

Article 25 of the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights, proclaimed in 1948, provides that “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food.” The right to food was in turn recognized by the UN Human Rights Committee in 1993, during a meeting attended by representatives of 52 countries held in Vienna, in which Brazil voted in favor of it and only one country didn’t (the US). In the UN International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which was included on the first page of the introduction of the text of the Zero Hunger Project, one can read that:

“the right to food means the right to be protected from hunger, the right to a reasonable standard of living, including food, clothing and shelter and the right to work.”

More recently, in response to a request from the Member States attending the 1996 World Food Summit, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights issued its “General Comment 12 – The right to Adequate Food.” This document became a landmark for human rights organizations and a guideline for the international community as a whole. Comment 12 insists on the need and obligation of all States to “respect, protect and fulfill” this right. In its paragraph 15, the document clearly states that: “[...] whenever an individual or group is unable, for reasons beyond their control, to enjoy the right to adequate food by the means at their disposal, States have the obligation to fulfill (provide) that right directly. This obligation also applies for persons who are victims of natural or other disasters.

The Brazilian Constitution of 1988 provides for a clear set of social rights that it defines as rights of people and communities intended to protect human beings from abuses from others and even from their own State.

Chapter II of the Federal Constitution sets out the social rights of all Brazilian citizens. Originally, article 6 reads as follows: “Education, health, work, leisure, security, social security, protection of motherhood and childhood, and assistance to the destitute are social rights under this Constitution.” (Official translation)

Although it was not expressly mentioned in our Constitution, it was considered that the right to food was contemplated in these rights, mainly in the right to health and assistance to the destitute. But the guideline issued by the United Nations led to a request for a constitutional amendment (n. 64) for the right to food to be expressly mentioned in the Brazilian Constitution. This amendment, which was passed in 2010 by the Brazilian Congress, changed the wording of article 6 to include the right to food as one of the social rights provided for in it. As a result, this article of the Constitution reads as follows now:

*“Education, health, food, work, leisure, housing, leisure, security, social security, protection of motherhood and childhood, and assistance to the destitute are social rights under this Constitution.”*

What is the practical result of the recognition of this right? The State was placed under the obligation to provide food to those who need it, who were, in turn, ensured the right to receive it.

The right to adequate, regular food should not be ensured through charity actions, but mainly by the State as an obligation, since, in the final analysis, it is the main representative of our society.

**Task 1:** Survey of basic laws providing for the right to food available in other countries. A survey (although not an exhaustive one) of these legal instruments (or of the main ones) is necessary, beginning with the legal-institutional framework provided for in the Constitution of each country for the right to food.

Comprehensive, consolidated public frameworks are still not available to assist families at food risk in Latin America. History provides only isolated examples where the government set up food supply facilities, subsidized restaurants and arrangements to distribute basic food baskets and milk and took other actions in this area in various countries of the region since the 1930s. As a result, it has been observed that governments have relied on philanthropic, private actions to provide food assistance.

Assistance in specific situations of lack of funds to acquire food has usually been provided by churches, trade unions and humanitarian organizations through charity actions. To increase this kind of assistance, increased food donations have invariably been relied upon, many of which from rich countries, perpetuat-

ing the dependence of countries and low-income populations on so-called humanitarian aid<sup>3</sup>.

Although the actions of religious organizations grew more and more, the main new development observed in the 1990s was the clear phenomenon of the direct involvement of corporations in social actions. Many reasons have been suggested for this new development: on the one hand, there was a “recognition that the State – the main entity responsible for the provision of basic social services – cannot tackle the country’s social problems by itself, for which reason it has been increasingly pointing out the need to work in partnership with civil society organizations for this purpose” (PELIANO, 2002). Companies are stimulated to engage in social actions for various reasons: tax incentives, better corporate image in the eyes of consumers, investors and the community. As for the consumer market, there is strong evidence that consumers tend to be more inclined to buy products of companies that promote humanitarian actions or support humanitarian causes.

In 1999, at the initiative of the United Nations Organization, key corporate leaders were invited to involve large corporations in pursuing the “Millennium Goals.” These goals were defined in various conferences sponsored by the UN in the 1990s and involved social, environmental and economic elements. As a result of this initiative, the Global Compact was signed between the UN and five of its agencies and over 1,000 companies of transnational reach.

Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger is the first goal of a list of eight goals that should be achieved by 2015. For hunger, the goal is reducing the number of hungry people by half, according to a commitment made by the nations gathered at the World Food Summit held in Rome in 1996.

In practical terms, the establishment of the Global Compact led multinational companies to coordinate their actions for this purpose in the areas in which they operate. These actions usually lead to a demonstration effect for domestic companies, including small and medium enterprises, making them raise the level of their actions and setting a benchmark for the sector<sup>4</sup>.

3. It is worth recalling the PL n. 480, which was established in the 1930s as a tool for the US government to procure agricultural products. As food purchases and stocks grew, the United States decided to channel part of the donations to Latin America under a policy known as “Alliance for Progress,” which in the 1950s also played political roles in the US strategy to deal with the effects of the Cold War in the region.

4. In this regard, see Ethos Institute, 2004.

## POVERTY AND FIGHTING HUNGER

In countries where aggregate food supply is relatively appropriate from the point of view of production (not necessarily of prices), the food security issue can be confounded with that of poverty, particularly of extreme poverty.

First of all, it should be clearly understood that food security is a policy to be applied to the population at large and not only to its poor segments. Typical food security policies, such as those related to food and nutrition education, product labeling, food quality and safety, among others, are good examples of policies that affect all people, regardless of their income.

It is also true, however, that food security involves an emergency aspect that can be observed even in developing countries, which produce agricultural surpluses for export, namely, hunger. In this case, hunger derives from the low purchasing power of much of the population. However, it would be a mistake to assume that a policy to fight poverty in general would be sufficient to tackle all the causes of hunger (MONTEIRO, 2003). This is so because even in developing countries with agricultural surpluses, hunger has at least two causes of a very distinct nature: first, it can be caused by prices, when food prices are high in relation to prevailing income levels as a result of production and/or distribution problems; second, even where food prices are relatively low, the income of families might not allow them to buy food in a sufficient amount due to other basic expenses such as with rent, transportation, education, health care, etc.

It is important to draw a distinction between food security policies and, more specifically, policies against hunger and policies designed to fight poverty in general. The first reason for this is that, as opposed to the situation in developed countries, where poverty is restricted to specific social groups (ethnic minorities, families headed by women and elderly people, among others), poverty in Latin America affects large population groups and has well-known structural causes (income and land concentration, low wage levels, etc.). For this reason, focused cash transfer programs do nothing more than reduce the suffering of literally excluded families. They need to be complemented by other actions of a “structuring” nature, that is, by actions intended to improve the social inclusion of those excluded from the social framework.

But there is a second reason why a food security policy – and particularly a policy against hunger – should not be diluted in a general policy intended to fight poverty. This reason is that although the relation between hunger and poverty constitutes a vicious circle, hunger is at the root of poverty and is actually one of its major causes. Hungry people cannot produce, work, enjoy good health. They can even attend school, but they cannot learn appropriately. On the other hand, well-nourished people can be poor but minimally able to respond to the stimuli of an educational policy, of a professional requalification policy, etc.

For this reason, it can be said that food security is part of what Sen (1988) referred to as a person's entitlements to food, which could be translated as the fundamental right to food (SEN, 1988). Entitlement refers to more than just any right and is at the same level as the right to life, as it is part of the fundamental rights of human beings. In other words: depriving people from the right to adequate food is depriving them from the right to a healthy life or denying them an inalienable attribute of their condition as human beings.

According to De Haen (2004), hunger is at the same time a cause and a consequence of poverty. Therefore, the author believes that a twofold approach is necessary to tackle hunger. The first one *is investing in productive sectors to create opportunities for improving the living conditions of those facing hunger and enabling them to become full citizens*. It includes actions to promote agricultural and rural development through the reform of policies and investments in agriculture.

Agriculture is not the only source of food, but together with non-agricultural rural activities it generates jobs and income for the large majority of the world's poor. However, the extent to which those facing hunger might enjoy advantages afforded by economic opportunities depends on the extent to which they are well-nourished, enjoy good health and are literate. A better nutrition is therefore a prerequisite for the poor to fully enjoy opportunities afforded by development.

The second dimension is *that of enhancing direct and immediate access to food* for those facing hunger through a broad range of safety nets and assistance networks. These can include cash and food transfer programs, as well as food and nutrition programs

such as school meal programs and nutritional supplementation interventions.

The conclusion of De Haen (2004) is that public policies exclusively focused on poverty reduction cannot “automatically” tackle the hunger problem. Although hunger is often the main cause of poverty, nutritional improvements are necessary for poverty to be reduced<sup>5</sup>. For this reason and according to the author, the program against hunger proposed by the FAO summarizes specific priorities and policies for public investments in achieving the goal defined in the World Food Summit of reducing the number of people facing hunger by half by 2015. Its five priority areas include improvements in agricultural productivity, investments in rural infrastructure, structural reforms and recovery of natural resources (land, water, biodiversity). The program also recognizes the need to focus on people facing hunger in urban areas, a particularly important problem in Latin America.

**Task 2: Basic questions to be answered in connection with this topic:**

1. What regions can be classified as having successfully addressed the food production problem (in quantitative terms) but not that of access to food due to the insufficient income of a significant percentage of their population?
2. What regions are facing problems caused by price hikes resulting from bottlenecks in the distribution of their food production?
3. What is the cost of hunger in terms of its implications for health (lower life expectancy, child mortality, etc.) and education (high repetition rates among school-age children, etc.)?
4. What would be the results of a policy against hunger assuming that all the cash transferred to poor populations will be mainly spent with food and other basic wage goods?

## HOW CAN FOOD (IN)SECURITY BE MEASURED?

According to De Haen (2004), “using indicators to measure the number of people facing food insecurity is very important both

5. According to De Haen (2004), “Where hunger rates are low, child mortality rates, particularly for children under 5 years old, are also low and life expectancy is higher in more affected countries; new-borns can expect to live a healthy life until the age of 38, while in countries with low hunger rates they can expect to live until the age of 60. In developing countries, between 50 and 60% of all deaths among children are directly or indirectly caused by hunger and undernutrition.”

for monitoring and selecting people to be assisted by programs designed to fight hunger. They can help one to understand *who* is facing hunger, *where* people facing hunger live and *why* they are facing hunger.” According to the author, “many indicators can be used for this purpose, each of which can be used to measure a different aspect of food security. No isolated measure is sufficient. On the contrary, a sequence of indicators is necessary for one to understand food insecurity in all its complexity and to find out who is facing hunger, where people facing hunger live and why they are facing hunger.”

According to the author, five food insecurity indicators are more commonly used:

- a) *Food availability*, measured as the total supply of calories and distribution of the access to these calories. This measure is used by the FAO in its statistics on the evolution of hunger in the world and has the merit of being a practical indicator for subsequent global guidelines, as it can be calculated for almost all countries<sup>6</sup>.
- b) *Food input*, which measures the physical amount of food available for consumption domestically.
- c) *Nutritional status*, which is based on anthropometric measures such as stunting (weight/height ratio). These indicators are available only for children and are mainly calculated based on primary health surveys.
- d) *Vulnerability*, which can be measured based on profiles of available means of subsistence or self-supply (production for one’s own consumption).
- e) *Access to food*, which is based on the domestic capacity to have a basic food basket (through income or some other valid means).

A study by Takagi, Graziano da Silva and Del Grossi (2001) identified different methods available for measuring the population not having enough to eat, which can be classified in two main

6. The measure of undernutrition (or hunger) used by the FAO is based on the per capita calorie availability per country and on a combination of the distribution commitment with a minimum demographically adjusted demand (cut-off line). The result is an estimate of the number of malnourished people. More recent calculations suggest that there are 842 million malnourished people in the world. Most of them (505 million) live in Asia and in the Pacific region, followed by 198 million in Sub-Saharan Africa. Approximately 53 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean are malnourished. In this regard, see DE HAEN, 2004.

groups: the direct method and the indirect method. The direct method captures the number of people and families that are not consuming enough calories and protein through surveys on consumption or anthropometric data. The appropriateness of food intake or of the weight of the population in relation to its height is, for example, evaluated. The continued *effect* of the lack of adequate food in the body is thus captured, but not the potential exposure of people to hunger and food insecurity.

The indirect method is designed to infer if a population is undernourished based on indicators other than calorie consumption and anthropometric data. The main variable used in indirect methods is the per capita household income. The initial assumption is that lack of income is the main factor preventing people from having enough to eat. FAO's methodology begins by calculating a country's food availability and then the total number of calories available per capita (local production less agricultural trade balance and food stocks). Next, it uses food consumption and income distribution indicators to estimate inequalities in access to food and arrive at a percentage of the people whose food consumption is below their minimum needs as defined beforehand, who are then classified as malnourished people. However, this measuring approach used by the FAO is not seen as sufficiently precise, as it is based on data for total calorie availability produced, estimating agricultural losses in agroindustrial processing and transportation. According to the FAO itself, the method tends to underestimate the actual number of malnourished people in a country, and is more appropriate for comparisons between countries and for assessing the potential capacity of agriculture in each country to feed its population.

The method that is used most in countries is the income insufficiency method, for which more studies on the problem of indigence and hunger are available both in Brazil and in international organizations such as Eclac and the World Bank. This method basically consists in defining a certain indigence and/or poverty line to calculate the number of families whose income is below that line. Actually, this method of estimating the poor population does not reveal the percentage of people who are truly "starving," since part of this population might have access to food basket and food stamp programs, food donations, etc. The criterion for defining the indigence/poverty line and the regionalization and monetary cor-

rection methods that are used are the ones that lead to differences in the figures mentioned in different studies. Among these, special mention should be made of studies that define this line based on a certain income that is unique to a given country, usually as a percentage of the minimum wage, or of studies based on the household consumption structure.

Rocha (2000) analyzed different studies and methodologies that use the consumption structure to define the indigence and poverty line. According to that author, various steps of these methods involve certain “arbitrary measurements” to calculate the number of indigent and poor people. As a result, each calculation is unique and cannot be compared to other forms of calculations (the author calculated that, according to the measures adopted in each calculation method, the indigence line can vary by 50% and the poverty line by up to 127%). These differences result from the options adopted to define the indigence and poverty lines in relation to the: definition of recommended amount of calories; definition of the lowest-cost food basket; estimate of non-food consumption; estimate of differences in costs of living in different regions of the country and updating of the monetary values for the indigence and poverty lines.

Although they are the main benchmark for countries and international studies, none of these studies suggested more advanced means to measure food insecurity considering not only people with insufficient access to food, but also people with inadequate access to it due to the lack of healthy food practices, and also families that, albeit not malnourished, have irregular access to food over time.

A team headed by the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine of the Medical Sciences School of the State University of Campinas in Brazil worked to validate a methodology inspired by the US Food Stamp program<sup>7</sup> and a tool to collect information in the form of a questionnaire to be filled out by families through which a scale of food insecurity is established in three levels (severe, moderate and light) based on the answers provided by the families<sup>8</sup>.

According to Segall & Marin (2009),  
two investigation projects in the United States provided the basis for

7. See the monitoring and evaluation system of the Food Stamp program in Takagi, Graziano da Silva and Belik, 2002.

8. In this regard, see SEGALL, 2004.

defining a psychometric scale designed to directly measure the magnitude of the food security and insecurity faced by the population. The first one was a doctor's degree thesis of the Cornell University and the other a scale intended to identify families facing hunger to be covered by an intervention project and warn US society of the food insecurity problem. The combination of these two experiences allowed for an 18-item measuring tool to be developed, the Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM), which was based on a scale that could not only measure the magnitude of the food insecurity problem, but also identify different degrees of access to food, ranging from complete satisfaction of food needs (food security) to progressively more serious levels of lack of access to food.

The Brazilian tool, which was called Ebia – Brazilian Food Insecurity Scale –, consists in the application of a 15-question questionnaire that was used at national level for the first time when the 2004 Pnad (National Household Sample Survey) of IBGE (Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics) was carried out. This tool was adapted to be used in other Latin American, Central American and Caribbean countries such as Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala and Haiti. In Central America, the scale was applied in case studies developed by Fanta – Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance, a project sponsored by the US government. More recently, technical experts have been making efforts to unify its procedures under a single scale called ELCSA – Latin American Food Security Scale. However, this is a huge challenge, considering the regional realities are quite distinct and, because all the questionnaires must undergo a validation process, differences emerge naturally, making it difficult to unify the scales.

## SPECIFICITIES OF A FOOD SECURITY POLICY (FS)

### SCOPE OF THE ACTIONS

First of all, reaffirming the notion that a food security policy should not be restricted to fighting hunger is fundamental, even though this might be the most pressing and visible of its actions. In addition, resuming actions against hunger helps (and very much so) to expand the political and social base of an FS policy, as has been argued above already.

In our opinion, an FS policy should have at least six distinct and linked dimensions:

- a) A *cash transfer program* to address the more urgent issue of insufficient access to necessary food by poorer segments of the population for lack of purchasing power. This is the food security component applied to very poor or miserable populations, made up of people who have no income to buy the most basic set of food items. This component includes actions to assist minority groups such as indigenous populations, Quilombo communities, etc.
- b) A *program of incentives to poor family farmers* for them to be able to meet an increasing demand for basic food items created by the higher purchasing power generated by cash transfer programs. It should be pointed out that most poor people in Latin American fall under the category of poor family farmers, landless people or people with limited land, who are usually disorganized and lack the capacity to benefit from public policies aimed at supporting the agricultural sector. For this purpose, different governmental levels (local, regional and national) must use their purchasing power to implement a program to procure food locally from family farmers, otherwise this increasing demand will be gradually met by traditional producers of export goods who might not be large farmers, but certainly are not the poor farmers who should benefit most from the expansion of agricultural markets brought about by food security programs.
- c) A *health and nutrition monitoring program* for specific population groups requiring greater attention (particularly elderly people, children and pregnant women) with a component for monitoring diseases caused by the lack of vitamins and micronutrients and ill-nourishment (high blood pressure, diabetes, etc.).
- d) A *program to control the food consumed* by the population and ensure the inspecting role of the government in this regard. A fundamental issue here is that of the labeling of food products, which should specify their composition and identify transgenic products for the sake of precaution. Special mention should be made at this point of the need to ensure

access to drinking water as a key requirement to reduce child mortality, particularly in Brazil's semi-arid region.

- e) A comprehensive *food and nutrition education program* designed for the population at large to enhance appreciation for available food items not being consumed by the population as they should and to disseminate principles of healthy food habits to all population segments. A key requirement for this purpose is to disseminate reliable information to consumers through the mainstream media (radio and TV).
- f) A *supply program* specifically designed for large cities and metropolitan regions where supermarket intermediation is predominant, with the aim of ensuring access to quality food to the low-income population. For this purpose, it is a must to redefine the role of the central supply facilities built in the 1960s and 1970s to develop closer links between farmers and consumers, as well as to encourage alternative supply programs in partnership with the private sector (large retail outlets, farmers' fairs, food banks, subsidized restaurants, etc.), apart from a specific set of food security programs such as food banks to reduce food wastage, school meal programs, social supply schemes, subsidized restaurants, etc.

In sum, there is evidence that supply, food, health care, education and nutrition elements should be jointly addressed. There is also evidence of the need to begin to monitor individuals or groups of individuals based on geographical areas or social groups facing greater vulnerability. It is therefore suggested that, for each situation, different intervention approaches should be considered combining a set of distinct policies to address agrarian reform aspects and the need to support family farming in rural areas; to set up food banks, community kitchens and subsidized restaurants in urban areas; to establish vegetable gardens and vivariums; to implement cash transfer policies; to promote gender inclusion actions, etc. For this purpose, priority should be given to setting up an integrated system to provide information on food security with data on production, prices, vulnerable groups, education systems and other important variables.

**Task 3:** Survey of available actions under these six key programs which constitute a food security policy, namely: cash transfer programs, programs in support of family farmers, health and nutrition monitoring programs, food quality control and labeling programs, food and nutrition education programs, and local supply programs.

## BOX 2: Food security policy for urban areas

One of the most frequent criticisms against the food security policy recommended by FAO is related to its excessive focus on tools meant to favor agriculture and rural populations, as most populations of the poor countries we are referring to (Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico) are urban or even metropolitan populations. Belik (2003) made an interesting evaluation of *food security policies for urban areas*. He analyzed in detail proposals for setting up food banks, subsidized restaurants and vegetable gardens in cities. Several points that he made suggest the need to reconsider the models adopted in Brazil and other Latin American countries so far.

In the case of food banks, for example, governments are making a huge effort to expand their existing networks when more successful experiences suggest the need to develop partnerships with private companies and organized civil society. Food banks are a basic component of a policy against food wastage to benefit society at large, but in the short run they offer advantages to private companies for their potential to preserve prices and profit margins and to boost their image on the market. For this reason, fiscal benefits should be discussed and considered in another context.

Subsidized restaurants should also be seen from a different perspective. We know that the definition of the scale to be adopted ends up determining the model to be implemented, the location of the restaurants and the audience to be focused on. Small restaurants can have high unit costs, but they could ensure the focused coverage of certain audiences. On the other hand, large restaurants provide gains of scale and allow for a massive coverage of the population without stigmatizing the poor. In either situation, the possibility of operating these restaurants under a concession regime through private companies, community organizations or cooperatives of unemployed people should be considered. This would not only make it possible to ensure access to food to the population, but also to implement a self-sustainable food security policy.

Fostering the establishment of vegetable gardens in urban areas is also a much-disseminated policy, but evidence shows that only a few experiences were successful in this area in a continued fashion, in Cuba and Argentina<sup>9</sup>. However, setting up vegetable gardens should be considered as a program focused not only on production components, but also on the sociability of the populations involved. Many different types of vegetable gardens can be set up in urban areas. They can take the form of community or collective schemes or of vegetable gardens kept by students, families in their homes, etc. What's important in all cases is establishing a policy to minimize risks of contamination by water and urban waste and to provide technical assistance to interested parties and ensure the organization of these new farmers.

The author concluded that we are experiencing a crisis in food security models for urban areas. The interventionist models adopted by States in the supply sector in the 1970s and 1980s have collapsed due to the fiscal situation of governments or to the prevalence of the neoliberal ideology. From any angle that we look at it, developing a food security policy with the participation of social forces and based on the organization and management of these actors is a very complex task. However, we should not lose sight of the constant need to have the government doing the job of coordinating the implementation of actions in urban areas and playing the role of regulating private interests.

### BOX 3: Food habits and food quality

In her work, Elizabete Salay (2003) showed that Latin American society is going through a nutritional transition phase. Although their rates are still high, protein-calorie undernutrition and iron, iodine and vitamin A deficiencies, which are usually associated with poverty, are being overshadowed by obesity, heart diseases, high blood pressure, diabetes and other diseases. The Latin American diet is indeed changing, as the population eats more fat and less fibers.

A public policy designed to fight problems caused by inadequate food practices and habits should take into account: the need to control information provided in the label and advertising of food products; the need to set standards and processes and implement nutrition education programs. Nutrition education should reinforce the need to change food habits and behaviors disseminated through food advertising. Because

9. The Cuban Urban Agriculture Program is one of the largest programs in Latin America. About half of all vegetables consumed by the Cuban population are grown in small urban vegetable gardens. The ProHuerta Program of Argentina has been operational for 12 years under the responsibility of Inta (National Agricultural/Livestock Technology Center). It is financed by the Ministerio of Social Development (MDS) and assisted 3.2 million people in the country in 2002.

the market generates incomplete information, governments should regulate this information and complement it to protect the health of the population.

As a general recommendation to policy managers in Latin America, an organization or committee should be set up to analyze nutritional information disseminated to the population by food manufacturers, promote surveys and hold campaigns to disseminate information on what a healthy diet is all about. It is also necessary to mobilize social actors to inspect and control the food industry, fast food restaurants and food distribution companies.

As for the *Codex Alimentarius*, a text prepared by Martinelli (2003) shows that there are few negotiation forums available in developing countries to discuss the new international standard being coordinated by the FAO and WHO. Actually, decisions on references of the Codex influence all the production chain and have huge impacts on trade. Historically, however, the Codex Committees are dominated by developed countries that end up establishing rules for tropical products and productive processes that have nothing to do with reality of tropical countries. Decisions on biotechnological food are made based on experts' evaluations, as well as on tolerance standards for additives, contaminants and toxins. Because these committees are dominated by public officials from developed countries (many of whom are importers of agricultural products), there is always the risk that certain standards might be set to impose trade barriers on developing countries.

One of the main challenges facing Codex right now is that of being recognized by consumers, which will only be possible through the independence of its agencies, swift decision-making processes, and more up-to-date procedures on the innocuousness of food products.

It is also fundamental to become more acquainted with tools available to implement food security programs. It is a mistake to believe that because many programs are already in place to promote better nutrition under the responsibility of different government spheres, an FS policy with the features described here could be established by simply combining or coordinating these programs. A food security policy needs to be backed by a Food Security Law based on the explicit constitutional precept of the right to food discussed above. However, since this right has not yet been fully consolidated in some of the region's countries, the best approach is to keep creating necessary legal instruments, as was done in the

Brazilian case of the Zero Hunger Program (Good Samaritan Charter to encourage food donations to food banks, program to procure food from family farmers without the need of tender processes up to a certain amount, etc.). Specifically in the Brazilian case, the efforts of organized civil society and the implementation of different programs since 2003 led to the drawing up of the Losan – Food and Nutrition Security Organic Law, which was passed in 2006. Actually, each of the six above-mentioned dimensions required infra-constitutional laws for these programs to be implemented. In the case of cash transfer programs, it was necessary to pass specific legislation setting criteria for selecting their beneficiaries, as well as to establish a complex system for processing direct cash transfers from the central government to the program's beneficiaries, preferably through a state-owned bank with a wide network of branches.

In this specific regard, another major effort was made to set up a record of beneficiaries of cash transfer programs and to keep it up-to-date to avoid potential frauds of different kinds. It is useless to set up a record of this kind and define goals to be achieved if the record is not periodically revised and updated. In the income bracket we are focusing on (poverty and indigence), families move constantly from one home to another and even from one city to another; and because their links with the labor market are informal and precarious, their members tend to alternate periods of reasonable occupation with others in which they don't work at all, such as, for example, in agricultural areas marked by strong seasonal variations in production.

The experience of the Zero Hunger Program showed that social participation is fundamental for two purposes. First, for mobilizing progressive social forces at local level to make sure that the families that register to be covered by the program are truly eligible for it and are not registered on the basis of political or religious favoritism. Second, for ensuring the participation of beneficiaries in the process of building public policies to promote local development, without which these cash transfer programs will boil down to palliative solutions for their extreme poverty and will not provide them with new alternative ways out of their situation as objects of assistentialism.

**BOX 4: The Managing Committees as social control mechanisms**

“How dare you choose a representative of my municipality without my permission? And what about the Mayor, have you forgotten that he is the boss here?”

Questions such as the ones above began to be constantly asked by municipal managers in small cities (with populations of up to 75,000) in the Brazilian northeastern semi-arid region when representatives of civil society were selected to be trained as a Food Security Agent of the Zero Hunger Program. These agents were charged with the responsibility of implementing the Managing Committee of the Food Card Program in their municipalities to be responsible, among other things, for ensuring the quality of the program and preventing the record of beneficiary families from being used for political purposes. The committee was to be set up with 2/3 of its members representing civil society and 1/3 of them representing the government, similarly to the municipal councils. It had, however, a clear assignment that strengthened and made the process for selecting beneficiaries more transparent and participatory, since the federal government program was not provided with a decentralized management framework. In 2003, 2,132 Managing Committees were set up throughout the country<sup>10</sup>.

The design of the committee created a fear among municipal public officials of losing control of the situation, as it defied an old model where they dictated all the rules and adopted clientelistic practices to exchange favors in their management of public affairs. Feeling threatened by the widespread adoption of a new model for managing public policies, in which the participation of civil society is fundamental, the mayors of some small municipalities in the Brazilian northeastern semi-arid region put up an orchestrated resistance to this new model.

And this new model came with the announcement of the establishment of a Local Managing Committee set up by Food Security Agents with six of its nine members chosen from among people linked to organized segments of civil society. This approach to selecting members for the local Managing Committee inspired the population and filled society with the hope of actual participation, the hope of people who feel that they have decision-making power over their lives for the first time. And as one of the Food Security Agents says, *the successive sectoral assemblies that are being held with the participation of different segments of society are a true show of citizenship*.

10. The committees were local social control bodies set up in municipalities in the semi-arid region and other localities with the participation of civil society volunteers, beneficiary families and local public officials charged with monitoring the families and inspecting the cash transfer program. They involved more than 19,000 volunteers who were assigned the task of mobilizing society around the Zero Hunger Program and of assessing the quality of the preexisting record of families.

People not only heed to the call of rural and urban community associations, trade unions, religious organizations, community councils, etc., they also believe that they are taking part in building something new. This rebirth of hope and interest in participating has a very special flavor, given the reality faced by these people, marked by the existence of a countless number of community councils for which grassroots participation was what mattered the least, as they were set up for the mere purpose of serving bureaucratic conveniences. That was the accumulated citizenship experience of these populations.

And the action of the voluntary participants in the Managing Committees exposed irregularities in the Unified Record of each municipality. And this practice of exposing the wounds of the record provided the necessary backing for implementing the Food Card Program (PCA) and was also applied, at the request of the committees, to the records of other social policies. Society now wants to know who are the families covered by all the programs as a basic assurance of the consolidation of a policy based on a serious approach, transparency and social justice principles.

This is how citizenship rights are being ensured in small municipalities in the Brazilian northeastern semi-arid region. And this is how grassroots participation is being built.

[Based on: *A cidadania que rompe dos grotões: o Comitê Gestor do Programa Fome Zero*, by Aldenor Gomes, 2003.]

## THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE ACTIONS

First of all, it should be mentioned that a food security program must be implemented at the national, state, regional and municipal levels simultaneously, i.e. a food security program should not be a sectoral action (even though it must attach priority to certain actions, as discussed above) and should not allow local actions to be disconnected from complementary actions at the regional and national level.

This does not mean that all actions should be carried out simultaneously in all locations, and much less that a priority set of actions for a region must be given the same priority in another region, considering the different socioeconomic and demographic features of any country.

Measures taken as part of a food security policy must be separated in at least three large distinct areas:

- a) rural areas and small villages, where occupations in agriculture/livestock prevail. The focus in these areas should be on supporting food production through family farmers, who almost invariably constitute some of the most important groups of poor and extremely poor groups in Latin American countries;
- b) urban zones, made up of medium-sized and large cities with populations ranging from 50,000 to 500,000, where significant industrial and trade activities are carried out;
- c) metropolitan zones.

Gordillo (2003) stresses that national food security plans should be fully reviewed with the aim of incorporating new dimensions, so as to make sure that resources will not be dispersed and lend greater effectiveness to their actions. According to the author, Latin American countries experienced a phase in the 1990s that can be characterized as one of first-generation reforms. Reforms such as privatization of public utilities, fiscal adjustments in public expenditures, trade liberalization and administrative decentralization were motivated by macroeconomic imperatives and had a direct impact on the agricultural sector. As a result, there were deep changes in agriculture/livestock planning, research and extension and in water resource management policies. However, although the presence of the public sector decreased in this area, the private sector and the third sector failed to occupy the space opened by the first-generation reforms.

Gordillo (2003) believes that the main challenge for the Food Security Policy is one of reestablishing a base on which progress can be made in achieving the goals of the “World Food Summit” and of the “Alliance against Hunger.” For a more immediate action, it is not enough to take measures to stimulate food production. Aspects related to access to food must be tackled at the same time that the production problem is addressed. As is well-known, hunger is both a cause and consequence of poverty and, therefore, programs to fight hunger should also focus their efforts on addressing issues related to income generation and distribution.

A practical example of this change is given by the Special Program for Food Security (Pesa) developed by the FAO in low-income countries. Currently, the FAO is implementing the program in

over 25 countries and it was seen that it required many adaptations that are already under way, such as that of launching an urban Pesa, which is already under implementation in Venezuela for the purpose of integrating rural and urban sectors through a better understanding of distribution channels (this topic will be resumed below).

However, much more can be done if we consider the need to implement deep changes in how development programs are operated. Generally speaking, there are many programs under way which compete with each other and lack a common coordination mechanism or discussion forum. To avoid the dispersion of resources, Gordillo (2003) recommends a shared agenda and a new institutional framework that is yet to be built. In this new planning scenario, some key aspects should be taken into account, such as the following ones: a) the need to pay more attention to gender issues, as in many cases women bear most of the responsibility for managing resources and assistance schemes; b) the need to adopt new approaches to assessing public interventions, quantifying risks and advances in how assisted communities are organized; and c) territorial development aspects, with their endogenous development potential and opportunities.

We will now analyze possibilities for the institutional inclusion of a new model for a program against hunger as proposed by the Zero Hunger Program in Brazil since 2003.

### *Institutional inclusion*

The experience of drawing up and implementing the Zero Hunger Program shows that at least three distinct and combined steps are involved in processes of this kind:

- a) Preparation of a proposal, involving national and international experts on the topic: this proposal should contain, apart from a diagnosis of the situation, goals, available resources and the design of the main policies to be implemented.
- b) Public consultations to discuss and redesign the proposal, seeking to secure a “minimum consensus” between institutions (churches, governments, trade unions and public personalities) and private organizations (NGOs, companies operating in the supply industry), with a view to mobilizing organized civil society and creating networks in sup-

- port of a program intended to promote food security and fight hunger and of its implementation horizon.
- c) Creation of an executive government agency to link up preexisting frameworks and implement the specific food security policies.

There is much controversy in relation to the scope of the actions to be carried out by this executive agency, as well as in relation to its institutional status. The Zero Hunger Program proposal defined that a National Food and Nutritional Security Council (Consea) should be set up as a first step to link all governmental agencies dealing with representatives of organized civil society (churches, trade unions, NGOs, entrepreneurial organizations, personalities, etc.); the second step would be to set up an executive secretariat reporting directly to the President of the Republic, which would play the role of linking up existing policies.

However, the diagnosis prepared by the Lula administration's transition team showed that five of the policies that were considered key for implementing a food security program – namely, cash transfer, support to family farming, health and nutrition monitoring, food education and food supply in urban areas – were either not operational or allowed for a high dispersion of resources, purposes and goals, that is, for implementing a food security policy it would be necessary not only to have a mechanism to coordinate preexisting programs, but also to carry out a deep revision of these programs or even to implement new programs from scratch<sup>11</sup>.

The result was the establishment of an Extraordinary Ministry of Food Security and Hunger Combat during the first year of the Lula administration, which was later replaced by a Ministry of Social Development that is in charge of cash transfers (already unified), social assistance and food security actions today. Although it is still early for an evaluation, this institutional design might have overemphasized cash transfer and social assistance policies, to the detriment of the food security policy *stricto sensu*. An alternative

11. Perhaps a paradigmatic example is that of cash transfer programs. Early in 2003, nothing less than six such programs were being implemented on a national scale, each of which for a distinct audience and with no compatibilization between them: the school grant, food grant, income grant, child labor eradication, food card and gas grant programs, not to mention other social assistance programs (benefícios de prestação continuada) for elderly and disabled people.

that was discarded in the first ministerial reform carried out early in 2004 to promote a centralization effort to reduce the excessive number of ministers (about 30) was one of placing cash transfer policies and the food security policy under the responsibility of a single ministry – preferably an extraordinary one, thus emphasizing the need to keep it closely linked to the Presidency of the Republic, leaving the social assistance policy (only the continuous cash benefits) under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Welfare, where it had originally come from. Apart from being completely different cash transfer systems<sup>12</sup>, the combination of these programs with the food security program would enhance the assistential role of these public policies, whose design is very distinct, since the former refer to cash transfers (whether voluntary or not) and must be focused, while the food security policy is meant to ensure universal access to the human right to adequate food.

**Task 4:** Surveying the distinct institutional frameworks of existing food security programs, as well as food supply, support to family farming, health and nutrition monitoring, cash transfer and social assistance programs.

An issue that must be addressed in the light of the institutional framework of the food security policy and of food security-related programs is that of integration with the private sector. As mentioned above, the Zero Hunger Program also created Consea, the body in which links are fostered between government and organized civil society. However, certain social segments – particularly those linked to enterprises, the union movement, churches and philanthropic organizations – can also play a role in supporting the program's objectives, provided that appropriate links are established between them to avoid an assistentialist bias. Each of these groups has its own specific features and interests around what is now conventionally referred to as social responsibility<sup>13</sup>.

12. In the Brazilian case, voluntary cash transfers are directly made from the general budget of the federal government to a bank account of each beneficiary, who is selected in the light of income criteria set by the program, in the case of the *Bolsa Família* Program (which unified the six voluntary cash transfer programs that existed before). Cash transfers related to the continuous cash benefits are “fund-to-fund” transfers, that is, they are transferred from the federal government to a specific fund of the program in which beneficiaries are registered based on a claimed individual right. This fund is managed by councils at the different governmental levels, with the participation of civil society members. Experience has shown that mayors control these local councils, often using the funds managed by them for clientelistic purposes.

13. In this regard, see the website <[www.fomezero.org.br](http://www.fomezero.org.br)>.

The entrepreneurs who are invited to take part in a priority program do sort of a “marketing of goodness,” which play a very important role in public opinion perception of government actions. The resulting partnerships might not bring them the amount of funds that might be expected, but they surely largely exceed expectations in terms of enhanced visibility and appreciation.

#### **BOX 5: Cistern Project: an example of partnership with private companies to promote food security**

The project was born in 2001, based on local experiences that confirmed the feasibility of using water stored during rainy seasons to supply families in Brazil’s semi-arid region all year round. Before that year, some NGOs were already providing training and organizing self-help actions to build cisterns in the semi-arid region; this work was led by Caritas, which kept an office in the area and transferred funds to the program regularly.

In 2001, an NGO network made up of 700 organizations from various northeastern states and from the north region of the state of Minas Gerais called ASA – Semi-arid Articulation – was created, and the P1MC – 1 Million Cisterns Program was launched, which is managed by an organization bearing the same name. Its objective was to build one million cisterns in 5 years relying on local systems for inputs, training and professionalization actions for local dwellers and shared management of funds. This program was designed to directly benefit 8 million people in a 900,000-km<sup>2</sup> area.

When the federal government launched the Zero Hunger Project in 2003, Febraban – Brazilian Bank Federation – saw that supporting the P1MC project would be the most direct and articulated way for the financial sector to engage in actions against hunger. Therefore, Febraban took on the commitment to donate funds, train technicians and ensure material means for building 10,000 cisterns. However, given the success of the initiative, Febraban signed a commitment to ensure the feasibility of building an additional 10,000 cisterns beginning in 2004.

The total cost for building each 16,000-liter cistern, including administrative expenses, is about US\$ 500, and Febraban is investing US\$ 10 million altogether in the P1MC project. Of this amount, under Brazilian law, a very small percentage of these funds can be deducted from taxes paid by the participating companies.

To ensure the project’s feasibility, Febraban also contributed its administrative experience in financial and human resources management. Forty-eight UELs – Local Executing Units – were set up staffed with techni-

cal experts and equipped with computers, cars and motorcycles for the purpose of registering families to be assisted by the initiative and train masons and people specifically in charge of making sure that the construction work would be completed on schedule and efficiently.

Febraban's participation in the initiative was fundamental to establish a production regime and a routine for implementing the project. Febraban's decision to join the project encouraged other companies to follow suit and the project grew rapidly. Currently, Febraban is considering the possibility of expanding the project by further involving other organizations such as Apoio Fome Zero, with the aim of involving clients and suppliers of the banks affiliated to it.

The union movement has been contributing very much to the initiative through social mobilization actions, lending legitimacy to food collection actions and other campaigns developed by the program. Finally, churches and philanthropic organizations have a comprehensive network of organizations that contribute an invaluable social capital to ensure the smooth operation of the program in all the localities where it is being implemented. These organizations play a key role in enabling the project to reach the "invisible poor," i.e. poor families who lack even basic civil documents to register as beneficiaries of different social programs. In the Zero Hunger Program, for example, these organizations played an active role both in social mobilization actions through their participation in the Managing Committees and in collecting/distributing food to people in need and in identifying families excluded from the program's record<sup>14</sup>.

## EXPECTATIONS AND OPERATIONAL CAPACITY OF THE STATE

As mentioned above, the political appeal of a proposal to fight hunger is very strong, but it also creates impossible expectations under the available institutional frameworks<sup>15</sup>.

14. One of the major causes of exclusion of a family from the record was that it lacked basic documents (ID, etc.), particularly women. To correct this situation, a partnership was established between the old Ministry of Food Security and the Human Rights Secretariat, the ministries of Justice and Defense, the Special Secretariat for Women's Policies, the Brazilian Association of Notaries (Arpen) and the inspectors general of ten states (Acre, Alagoas, Bahia, Ceará, Maranhão, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte and Sergipe). Families lacking basic documents were identified by the Managing Committees of the Zero Hunger Program in the process of registering beneficiaries. The Managing Committees were trained using a manual called *Manual de Orientação do Monitor* that provided information on how to get a birth certificate for people who lacked one or had lost it.

15. Because, among other reasons, as Betinho said, "those who are starving cannot wait." The Brazilian experience of implementing the Zero Hunger Program showed that the greatest "impatience" and pressure for doing something about hunger don't come from the "excluded" ones, because, among other reasons, they are not very organized usually. This impatience and pressure come from the media in general, trying show that the program "will not work," perhaps to reaffirm that there is no solution to hunger – or that different people have "their own" solution to the hunger problem.

In addition to the enhanced expectations generated by the cause of fighting hunger, national States lost their operational capacity after the decade of reforms and privatizations experienced in Latin America (in this regard, see GORDILHO, 2003). As a legacy of these changes, national States were very weak in the beginning of the 20th century in their capacity to operate on the ground, since they have few institutional tools to do so. As a result of the lack of public enterprises in the supply area, for example, the role of the government in this area is only one of financing and regulating private groups that operate in this sector. The same can be said of cash transfer programs when the country doesn't have a public bank with sufficient branches to reach families living in the poorer areas.

There is also the perverse logic that the private sector can do anything that is not forbidden, while governments can only do what is explicitly allowed by the law in force, which almost never contemplates the human right to food and much less provides for legal instruments to back up government actions to ensure this right to all citizens.

The unavoidable result of this situation is that, apart from having to build partnerships with the above-mentioned segments, the government ends up delegating the role of implementing its social policies, among which the food security policy, to non-governmental organizations. The big problem is that a large percentage of these NGOs, if not the majority of them, are just groups intent on defending private interests that end up fragmenting the implementation of the food security policy or subordinating it to their own interests.

**Task 5:** Investigating the role of non-governmental organizations and their main action areas, as well as of international organizations that support them. The assumption is that, in most cases, despite their innovative approaches, the excessive fragmentation of the actions taken by NGOs and the sporadic nature of their interventions can only ensure limited benefits to people facing food insecurity, but NGOs can be important partners in the operationalization and inspection of food security programs.

## SOME POLICIES AVAILABLE IN LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

The fact that food insecurity continues to prevail requires new considerations on its causes and on policies that have been

proposed to tackle the issue in the region. In most Latin American countries, it can be observed that it is becoming increasingly difficult to establish a correlation between food insecurity and rural households (or activities). In general, we can say that the poverty and food insecurity cycle affects the region as a whole. However, due to increasing urbanization and to the slower pace at which work and job opportunities are being generated and “public goods” are being provided, particularly education and health care services, absolute poverty has been growing in cities at a quite fast pace<sup>16</sup>.

Analyzing the main movements involved in policies against hunger and poverty in the region, we can see that their results have been limited so far. In the chronic crisis situation Latin America has been growing through in recent decades, rural poverty has actually increased. In countries where rural poverty decreased, its reduction is explained by the emigration of poor people to cities. Experience has shown that it is not only a matter of articulating job-generating policies. Another important element is that enhancing access to land is a determinant factor for reducing poverty in Latin America to a large extent.

Considering the programs that have been implemented in the region in recent years, we can separate them in five large groups according to the scope of their actions. These groups are the following ones: Incentives to Productive Activities, Social Investment Funds, Direct Cash Transfers, Environmental Conservation Programs, and Community Participation.

According to Ramirez (2003), assistentialist and focalized policies have not produced effective results. The same can be said when these policies have only short-term objectives and do not involve more intense efforts in the medium and long run. As for the methodology adopted in their actions, a gap can be observed between production-oriented proposals and the reality of the market, which is poor and lacks coordination for certain types of farmers. To address this problem, traditional credit and technical assistance programs are being replaced by actions to promote integrated and self-sustained territorial rural development (DTR).

16. In this regard, see BELIK & DEL GROSSI, 2003. They mention the Brazilian case, showing that poverty is migrating to cities and that there is a larger income gap in small and medium-sized cities.

Finally, with respect to the execution of these policies, there is no doubt that direct government interventions are necessary, but in many cases they have been shown slow and involved a lot of red tape<sup>17</sup>, making room for a new paradigm based on the outsourcing of services and sharing of costs among the beneficiaries of programs.

On the other hand, increasing requirements imposed by developed countries in terms of food quality, sanitary controls, origin controls, professionalization of international negotiators, etc. require increasing specialization and professionalization from countries. These are precisely the areas in which Latin American countries face limitations. According to UNCTAD, developing countries need to improve their laws, training, infrastructure and participation in international negotiations with the aim of not only developing the necessary know-how to meet legitimate requirements of developed countries but also to challenge them in the WTO when they have protectionist purposes (PRESSER, 2003). In this regard, Latin American countries are still in a very incipient stage of this qualification process.

However, the main criticism in relation to this group of actions is the excessive emphasis placed by developing countries on the need to reduce the international tariff and non-tariff barriers imposed by developed countries to be able to reduce poverty and hunger. There is no evidence that greater access to international markets will necessarily ensure a better income distribution and poverty reduction. Much on the contrary. Due to the still dualist feature between specialized entrepreneurial agriculture and small-scale, diversified agriculture in Latin American countries, and to the extremely high income concentration levels that characterize them, greater trade liberalization is likely to benefit mostly exporters, who traditionally belong to the corporate sector and are linked to large enterprises, enhancing income inequalities in these countries even more. Even if this liberalization brings more foreign currencies and increases the funds available in federal budgets, there is no guarantee that these resources will be applied in successful food security programs and programs to fight

17. One example is that of the Unified Record of beneficiaries of cash transfer programs, which is usually operated by public banks.

hunger. In addition, it could lead to hikes in food prices in those countries, affecting urban populations and, particularly, countries with large poor populations in urban areas, as is the case of large Latin American countries<sup>18</sup>.

The so-called PESAs (Special Food Security Programs), already mentioned above, are programs with a focus on providing incentives to family farming which have been implemented by FAO since 1994 with a view to ensuring the achievement of the goals defined during the World Food Summit. They are being implemented in over 70 countries right now. The assumption of these programs is that the productivity of small farmers in developing countries can be significantly increased through technological changes designed to enhance their economic inclusion and surplus production and to promote economic growth in rural areas in general. The topics addressed by these programs are the following ones: better water use, intensification of production systems and diversification of agricultural systems.

However, despite the huge advances observed in the design and conceptual definition of these programs, which are of a localized nature initially, countries that adopted them have not yet managed to go beyond their initial experimental phase due to different problems, including budget problems. For this reason, their reach ends up being very limited in relation to their potential, although they contemplate a second stage of expansion and application at national level. An FAO evaluation (FAO-ROME, 2003) indicates that a significant number of developing countries have requested the organization to support them in designing national programs with resources of their own, and that they recognize the key role policies in support of small-scale family farming can play in promoting food security, poverty reduction and sustainable use of natural resources.

Therefore, the FAO is preparing itself to face new challenges in this field, with the aim of:

- giving priority to projects with a strategic and catalyst role, channeling existing resources to them;

18. According to a study carried out by the US International Economics Institute quoted in an article called *Estudo questiona ganho de abertura agrícola* (Folha de S. Paulo newspaper, Jun 20, 2004).

- promoting the establishment of national alliances against hunger;
- ensuring as much synergy as possible between FAO projects that contribute to promote food security;
- mobilizing countries to increase their contributions to the FAO Trust Fund for Food Security and Food Safety;
- encouraging countries committed to reducing hunger to develop national food security projects and programs to be implemented in their whole territory;
- improving the coordination between local FAO offices and the coordinators of the PESAs for the purpose of ensuring greater synergy and links between domestic and international projects.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Some observations and recommendations will be provided below that can be useful for planning food security policies in Latin America and for new studies on the topic, namely:

- i. It has been recognized that the food and nutrition situation in Latin America has become more serious in recent years. In the region's countries as a whole, expected downward trends in child undernutrition were not confirmed, making it difficult to achieve the millennium goals. Likewise, poverty levels in rural areas are still high. These elements lead to the need to reconsider the food security policies adopted until now.
- ii. Programs against hunger should be based on a food security concept that involves much more than measures to step up food production and increase access to food. In this regard, issues related to food quality, consumption education and nutritional information are directly linked to food security, considering that the percentage of obese people and people with diabetes and other diseases caused by undernutrition is increasing. Cash transfer programs are also fundamental to ensure access to food to poorer families, as well as a program to provide incentives to family farmers, a health and nutrition monitoring system, and a local supply program.

- iii. A more active participation of Latin American countries in international discussions on the innocuousness of food products will lead to a more egalitarian position in conflicts caused by non-tariff barriers imposed on exports of agricultural products. Currently, developed countries – which are importers of agricultural products – dominate the international forums where rules and standards are established – many of which are unrealistic – with strictly commercial objectives. For the region, an initial step would be that of coordinating domestic policies, creating single and recognized innocuousness certificates and, most importantly, eliminating internal barriers between countries of the same bloc.
- iv. As was done in the Zero Hunger Program of the Brazilian federal administration, what is important is consolidating the food security policy as a cross-cutting policy (and not a merely sectoral one – in this case, usually linked to the agricultural sector – or an assistential policy) and as a key element in the planning of any government. The goal of eradicating hunger is one to be reached by all governments, strengthened by a president who attaches true priority to achieving it. Food security involves aspects related to food production, distribution and consumption and to health, education and, mainly, development. This is so because only development can bring about appropriate conditions for eradicating hunger from a country once and for all. Therefore, governmental budgets must be subordinated to this goal and not the other way around. And the goals of each ministry and agency combine with and strengthen each other, leading to a single outcome. This is the great challenge.
- v. At the same time, building a National Food Security Policy is also a strategic sectoral action. Therefore, in the process of drawing up this policy, it is important to assign a specific agency to coordinate it with a specific budget for this purpose, which should, also preferably, not be linked only to one preexisting sector: agriculture or social assistance, for example.

- vi. This is also related to the importance of drawing a distinction between food insecurity and hunger and between hunger and poverty as well. These are different concepts requiring different actions on the part of the public sector. Greater consideration of food security concepts and of the notion of the human right to food would allow governments to more easily realize the need for specific policies and specific frameworks and laws to address them.
- vii. In the case of Latin America, where a culture of civil society organization and participation has been lacking historically, these policies must be participatory and empowering in nature. Strengthening bonds with local communities and fostering shared management mechanisms between government and civil society is a must. This is necessary because hunger is not just a statistical or biological phenomenon. It is also a political phenomenon. And it is not just a problem caused by late access to consumer goods, but one of deprivation of citizenship rights. It is a natural consequence of a perverse development model that generates privileges and deprivation. The involvement of communities in drawing up, following up on and inspecting programs in this area ensures them citizenship rights and means for their future empowerment.
- viii. The experience of FAO in implementing PESAs throughout Latin America has been positively evaluated and has produced valuable inputs that can be used for developing national or regional food security plans or even interventions in specific aspects of the strategy for fighting hunger and rural poverty.
- ix. Implementing food security policies focused on urban areas has become imperative. As a result of the crisis of public intervention models in the supply sector, new initiatives have been launched and much of what has been done so far should be reconsidered and reviewed. Dividing the roles of public and private actors is very important for expanding urban programs, since supply needs in urban centers are basically met by the private sector through supermarkets. However, it should be borne in

mind that the food insecurity problem in urban areas is more closely related to inadequate living conditions experienced by families in terms of housing (no access to piped water, sanitation, public transportation) and of precarious working conditions and low income. Therefore, job generation policies, measures to increase the minimum wage, and programs focused on housing and sanitation have a key role to play in urban settings.

- x. in the medium-sized and small cities, the Food Acquisition Program and related institutional food programs are a good example of a policy that has improved both the income of farmers and the food standards of the population at large. Policies designed to create institutional markets such as fairs and large retail outlets are also examples of initiatives that benefit both producers and consumers.
- xi. Finally, it should be highlighted that, particularly in the case of Latin America, combining food security policies with massive income distribution policies is a must. The structural causes of hunger and food insecurity lie in an unequal income structure and in its perpetuation and expansion. Structural policies and governmental measures to promote development, even with scant resources, should therefore be simultaneous, or else the root of the problem will not be fixed.

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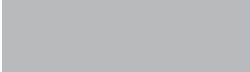
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## PROFILE OF THE AUTHORS

### **Adoniram Sanches Peraci**

Agronomist graduated from the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR) with a master's degree in Social Sciences from Colégio de Post Graduados (Mexico). He is currently the Secretary for Family Farming of the Ministry of Agrarian Development.

### **Adriana Veiga Aranha**

Social worker, holder of a master's degree in Public Administration with concentration in Social Policies, professor at the Catholic University of Minas Gerais and at the Polytechnic University of Mozambique, and a civil servant of the Municipality of Belo Horizonte. She is Special Advisor for the Zero Hunger Program at the Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Combat.

### **Caio Galvão de França**

Agronomist with a master's degree in Sociology from the Federal University of Minas Gerais. He is currently the Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Agrarian Development.

### **Francisco Menezes**

Director of the Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analyses (Ibase) and chair of the National Food and Nutritional Security Council (Consea) from 2004 to 2007.

### **Gilson Alceu Bittencourt**

Agronomist specializing in Public Policies with a master's degree in Economic Development and Agriculture. Member of secretary for Economic Policies of the Ministry of Finance.

**Joaquim Soriano**

Agronomist graduated from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). He is currently the coordinator of the Territories of Citizenship Program and director of NEAD – Center for Agrarian Studies and Rural Development of the Ministry of Agrarian Development.

**José Graziano da Silva**

Extraordinary Minister of Food Security and Hunger Combat during the 1st administration of president Lula. Retired titular professor of the Economics Institute of the State University of Campinas (Unicamp) and currently FAO's Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean.

**Mauro Eduardo Del Grossi**

Professor at the University of Brasília, holder of a doctor's degree in Economics from the State University of Campinas (Unicamp) and is advisor to the Ministry of Agrarian Development.

**Maya Takagi**

Agronomist with a doctor's degree in Economic Development from the State University of Campinas (Unicamp) and researcher of Embrapa.

**Renato S. Maluf**

Professor at the Graduate Program in Social Sciences in Development, Agriculture and Society of the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro (CPDA;UFRRJ). Chair of Consea (2007-2011). Member of the High Level Experts' Steering Committee for Food and Nutrition Security (CFS/FAO).

**Walter Belik**

Titular Professor of the Economics Institute and coordinator of the Center for Food Studies and Research of the State University of Campinas (Unicamp).

The launching of the “Zero Hunger Project – a proposal for a food security policy in Brazil” in October 2001 by presidential candidate, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, reflected the maturing of discussions and proposals on food security and fighting hunger, which had become national priorities to be addressed through planned and decisive state actions with social participation.

With the electoral victory of President Lula in 2003, the Zero Hunger project became the main governmental strategy guiding economic and social policies in Brazil, signaling a move away from the previous dichotomy that had characterized these policies. The government has since taken steps to integrate structural policies into emergency policies in the fight against hunger and poverty. New, differentiated policies for family farming have been implemented and basic legislation has been drawn up for national food security and nutrition policy.

This book forms part of the NEAD *Special series* and contains a series of key texts for understanding the Brazilian experience of Zero Hunger at different points during its eight-year implementation period as a government programme. This compilation addresses a range of subjects, such as the mobilization of different segments of society, the role of family farming, recent advances and challenges faced, among others.



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