

CIDA
ACDI

Increasing Food Security

CIDA'S FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY



Canadian International
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Agence canadienne de
développement international

Canada

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CIDA's Food Security Strategy

Achieving food security is a significant and growing challenge in the developing world and highly critical to alleviating poverty. People's health and education and their ability to work, assert their rights, and achieve equality are compromised by not having food security. In developing countries, women and girls are the most susceptible to the impacts of food insecurity because they have less access to and control over resources than men.

There are numerous causes of food insecurity. These include population growth and rising food, transportation, and agricultural costs. As well, the recent economic downturn has resulted in reduced global investment in food and agricultural development.

By building upon past successes in sustainable agricultural development, in food assistance and nutrition, and in research and development, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) will increase food security in developing countries by meeting basic needs, finding sustainable solutions, and encouraging innovation.

What is Food Security?

The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (<http://www.fao.org>) defines food security as existing when people have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and enable an active and healthy life. Food security is addressed:

- when food is **available** from domestic production, imports, or as food aid;
- when there is **access** to food from household production, local markets, or public support networks;
- when the **quality** of food is healthy and nutritious; and
- when each of these factors are **stable** throughout the year.

What is the Current Situation?

Threats to global food security are a recurring theme. The 2007–2008 food price crisis drew significant international attention to the issue of food security. However, even before this crisis, more than 923 million individuals did not have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food. It is now estimated that in 2009, there were 1.02 billion food insecure individuals—one sixth of the world's population.

The majority of the more than 1 billion individuals who are food insecure are small-scale farmers living in rural areas, women and children. There are about 500 million small-scale farms worldwide that support more than 2 billion individuals—one third of humanity. In many developing countries, particularly in Africa and Asia, small-scale farmers, the majority of whom are women, produce 80 percent of the food consumed. These small, family-based farms have tremendous potential to make agriculture a key driver for both sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction.

Women are the central drivers of change. Subsistence farming is often an immediate means to food security at the household level. In many countries—especially in sub-Saharan Africa—up to 80 percent of small-scale farming is carried out by women, while larger commercial agricultural activities are often dominated by men. The large proportion of agricultural production attributable to women in developing countries makes them important agents of economic development and food security. Yet, while women’s involvement in the agricultural sector is critical, their control over the means of agricultural production and, in particular, land ownership is becoming weaker with the globalization and commercialization of the food industry.

National and regional capacity to address food insecurity must be strengthened. Governance constraints and continuing challenges at the national and regional levels can undermine efforts to respond to food insecurity. The level of institutional capacity is considered a key determinant for the attainment of food security objectives in many countries. Specific governance issues related to food insecurity vary enormously within countries and regions. Lack of integration between national policies and implementation mechanisms at the local level, such as investments in infrastructure to support farm-to-market transportation and access-to-market information, and limited extension services to ensure appropriation by farmers of new agricultural practices that could boost sustainable agricultural productivity are examples of important factors limiting improvements to food security.

Global food security will continue to be vulnerable. The evolving financial crisis and economic recession are further aggravating the stability of food systems. Energy insecurity and high energy prices will continue to negatively affect the availability and access to food, particularly given that the production, transportation, and distribution of food is reliant on energy markets. The major long-term challenge to global food security will be to meet the increased demand and changing diets of the world’s rapidly increasing population, the majority of whom will be children and youth. Global food production must increase by 70 percent by 2050 to keep pace with increasing demand. In addition, the unpredictable impacts of climate change on the global food system, compounded

by a significantly reduced and degraded environmental resource base—particularly the increasing shortage of fresh water—will further exacerbate food insecurity and other vulnerabilities of the poor.

CIDA'S Food Security Strategy

CIDA will increase food security for the poor in those partner countries and regions where food security is identified as a key priority. All programming initiatives will be developed and implemented following internationally agreed principles of aid effectiveness and will contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development. These initiatives will be designed to increase the resilience of the poor by reducing their vulnerability to immediate and long-term impacts that affect their food security. Particular emphasis will be placed on ensuring that rural women small-scale farmers have equal opportunities to contribute to increasing food security.

Going forward, Canada's development assistance in food security will focus on:

- increasing the **availability of food** by sustainably increasing agricultural production and productivity;
- improving **access to food** by meeting immediate food needs and addressing longer-term accessibility through sustainable livelihoods;
- increasing availability and access to **quality nutritious food** by diversifying diets, fortifying or bio-fortifying staple crops, and increasing nutritional supplements, while integrating nutrition and food safety considerations;
- increasing **stability of food security** by strengthening sustainable management of the food value chain; and
- supporting improved **governance of the global food system** for increased coherence, coordination, and accountability on food security issues at the national, regional, and international levels.

Paths to Action

CIDA's food security efforts will be using three paths:

- **sustainable agricultural development** to build the capacity of small-scale farmers, agriculture-related organizations, and governments and to support national and regional agricultural and food security strategies;
- **food assistance and nutrition** to provide more flexible, predictable, and needs-based funding to meet the emergency and long-term food and nutrition needs of the most vulnerable and higher-risk populations; and

- **research and development** to broaden and deepen publicly available research that makes significant improvements to food security outcomes.

Sustainable Agricultural Development

Historically, very few countries have achieved sustainable and complex economies without first successfully developing a domestic agricultural sector. Agriculture is the sector from which most of the rural poor derive their income. In Africa, for example, 73 percent of the population is rural, with more than 65 percent—mostly women—engaged in agriculture and the remainder involved in forestry, agroforestry, and small-scale mining. Agriculture is central to livelihoods and is a primary source of economic prosperity, human health, and social well-being. In Africa, the agricultural sector generates, on average, 32 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). Furthermore, according to the World Bank (<http://www.worldbank.org>), the GDP growth based on agriculture is about two to four times more effective in reducing poverty than the GDP growth originating outside the sector.

Increased agricultural production and productivity cannot come at the expense of the environment. With a rapidly degrading natural resource base, the current agricultural paradigm—which demands increased use of fertilizers and fresh water combined with increased land expansion—is not sustainable. CIDA's Food Security Strategy promotes the adoption of sustainable agricultural development wherein agroecological approaches—such as resource conservation, environmental impact mitigation, and climate change mitigation and adaptation—are integral to programming aimed at increasing agricultural production and productivity.

Priority areas

As part of this Food Security Strategy, CIDA will:

- more than double investment in sustainable agricultural development—based on 2007–2008 levels—over three years;
- support national and regional agricultural strategies and their implementation at all levels and the strengthening of an enabling environment for sustainable rural development as well as the development of integrated value chains and the integration of the agricultural market while strengthening the accountability mechanisms in related government ministries and agencies;
- support agroecological approaches that boost farmers' resilience to climate change while minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, combatting desertification, and preserving and promoting biological diversity;

- support efforts underway through the World Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (<http://www.ifad.org>) to help address the food security needs of vulnerable populations, in particular, of women;
- take a proactive role on joint donor–government agricultural groups in countries of focus (<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/eng/JUD-51895926-JEP>) to enhance harmonization while continuing to promote an integrated, multi-stakeholder approach.

Expected results

- Increased sustainable agricultural production and productivity by rural small-scale farmers, especially women farmers
- Strengthened policies, more accountable institutions, and better management processes within partner governments

Food Assistance and Nutrition

Hunger and malnutrition are the greatest threats to public health and result in more deaths than HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. Emergency food assistance, social safety nets, and nutrition interventions, including the provision of micronutrient supplements, play an important role in addressing the immediate needs of the most vulnerable and higher-risk populations and in stabilizing the situation.

Emergency food assistance is needed today in many developing countries and will continue to be required in the future to deal with situations of acute food insecurity. In addition to focusing on its quantity, continued improvements to the quality of food assistance will make for a more effective, sustainable, and predictable emergency food assistance system.

The importance of nutrition within the concept of food security demands broader recognition, understanding, and response. UNICEF (<http://www.unicef.org/>) has stated that malnutrition plays a part in more than one third of all child deaths in developing countries. Malnutrition has devastating impacts on both the generations of today and tomorrow, worsening the health status of populations while reducing their resiliency to disease and shock. Nutrition interventions such as the provision of micronutrients, the diversification of diets, the fortification of staple foods, and school feeding programs are necessary to combat this critical component of food insecurity.

Priority areas

As part of this Food Security Strategy, CIDA will:

- work with the World Food Programme (<http://www.wfp.org/>) to:
 - encourage flexible, predictable funding amongst the donor community,
 - support nutrition interventions, the use of social safety nets and food distribution systems, and school feeding programs, and
 - work with other countries to improve the Food Assistance Convention (http://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XIX-48&chapter=19&lang=en&clang=_en), which is the main international agreement governing food aid;
- support the incorporation of nutrition considerations into broader food security initiatives and increase micronutrient programming; and
- support and strengthen national and regional food reserves and food crisis alert and prevention systems.

Expected results

- More lives saved and better overall health as a result of improved access to sufficient quantities of nutritious food
- Improved quality and effectiveness of food aid programming

Research and Development

As investments in agricultural research and development have declined over the past 30 years, so too have global agricultural productivity and global food security. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (<http://www.fao.org/>) estimates that global food production must increase by 70 percent by 2050 to keep pace with increasing demand. Given resource scarcity, the overall complexity of food security, and the unprecedented challenges brought about by shifts in natural and economic forces, investment in agricultural research and development is essential for meeting current and future demand.

Canada already has considerable experience in building capacity in agricultural research and development, at home and abroad. We are a significant contributor to international agricultural research and development, with long-term support to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) (<http://www.cgiar.org/>) and extensive efforts through the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) (http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-1-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html).

Canadian academia and non-governmental organizations also contribute substantially to research for agriculture and play a critical role by extending this knowledge to developing countries and helping ensure its application.

Priority areas

As part of this Food Security Strategy, CIDA will:

- in partnership with the IDRC, create a Canadian international food security research fund to support research partnerships with developing countries;
- work with the CGIAR toward increasing the nutritional value of crops and enhancing the resiliency of agricultural systems to climate change;
- strengthen national and regional agricultural research systems; and
- ensure investments in research inform its own and its development partners' future food security policies and programs.

Expected results

- Better access to new and locally adapted technologies and specialized expertise for farmers in developing countries
- More environmentally sustainable agricultural production and productivity
- More nutritional crops and agricultural systems that are resilient to climate change

Integrated and Comprehensive Strategy

CIDA's Food Security Strategy presents a comprehensive approach that will guide the Agency's response to food insecurity while contributing to poverty reduction. By incorporating short-, medium- and long-term measures, the strategy provides the flexibility to continue responding to developing country partners' identified needs. It also presents opportunities for integrating sustainable solutions by way of the three identified paths. Where possible and aid effective, the Food Security Strategy will seek opportunities for promoting integrated programs to attain its objectives.

The strategy has been designed to be mutually supportive of CIDA's sustainable economic growth and children and youth thematic priorities.

CIDA's Food Security Strategy has undergone a strategic environmental assessment, the results of which will help guide food security programming and integrate equality between women and men, environmental sustainability, and governance to achieve long-term solutions. Certain significant food security issues are broad, all encompassing global issues that are considered in

complementary development strategies or are better addressed in more comprehensive policy forums. For example, water is a critical issue as an agricultural input, central for natural resource management and energy production, and an essential component of health and sanitation. Complementary work in these areas will be accomplished through CIDA's children and youth or sustainable economic growth thematic priorities and the efforts of partner institutions.

CIDA will review its progress against the Food Security Strategy and report this progress and any lessons learned on a regular basis. All activities associated with the development and implementation of this strategy are in compliance with the *Official Development Assistance Accountability Act* (2008) c.17.