

**Khartoum Food Aid Forum
6-8 June, 2006**

EXPERT OPINION

GLOBAL TRENDS IN FOOD AID

Daniel Maxwell

The World Food Programme (WFP) has organized a Food Aid Forum from 6-8 June 2006 in Khartoum, as part of an ongoing process to develop the long-term strategy of WFP in Sudan. In support of the Forum, a series of Expert Opinion papers have been prepared by a wide range of partners on various aspects on food security strategies and their implications for WFP programmes in Sudan. In line with the objectives of the Forum, it is hoped that these papers will help inform a strategic framework offering direction to WFP Sudan through 2011 consistent with national priorities, and improve the understanding of the role and impact of WFP programmes in Sudan.

GLOBAL TRENDS IN FOOD AID

Daniel Maxwell

Introduction: Global factors shaping the future of food aid

Operational agencies face increasing challenges in the programming of food aid. Globally, the international community has committed itself to the Millennium Development Goals—the first of which is cutting by half the number of food insecure people in the world. Food aid is a critical component of the strategy to meet this goal. But while food aid is a key component of humanitarian response to complex emergencies, its use in other programming contexts is subject to numerous constraints and criticisms. And even in humanitarian emergencies, the food aid response is often late, unreliable, and out of proportion to other, equally important elements of response to protect human dignity. This paper reviews some salient global trends affecting the future of food aid and food aid programming, focusing on trends that shape the availability and usage of food aid, and its complementarity with other resources.

Contextual factors will always be of critical importance in the design, implementation and impact of food aid programs in any given situation. However, given that other papers for this workshop focus specifically on the Sudan context, this paper identifies some of the more global factors that will shape the future of food aid programming. Contextual factors aside, three major factors will shape foreseeable future of food aid. First, the mechanisms of global governance of food aid are outdated, under review and may undergo major changes in the coming years or even months—most notably the renegotiation of the Food Aid Convention (FAC); current debate about food aid in the context of agricultural subsidies currently taking place in the Committee on Agriculture of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The second significant factor is donor agency trends. Overall levels of food aid have dropped fairly steadily in recent decades and there are several discernable trends resource allocation, procurement and usage of food aid. Third, although food aid programming tends to be viewed in some circles as nothing more than logistics and commodity accounting, there is in fact a significant set of best practices developing in food aid programming. How well these practices—the emergent internal standards of the industry—are integrated into programming constitutes the other major factor determining the foreseeable future of food aid programming. The extent to which best practices are adopted and incorporated affects not only program quality and impact, but arguably also resource availability and accountable governance. Lastly, the paper speculates briefly about the implications of these trends for food aid operations in Sudan.

Several historic trends with food aid have undergone significant change (Barrett and Maxwell, 2005). Historically food aid was a vent for surplus production in North America. Today food aid is purchased on the market and (most of the time anyway) is not a means of surplus disposal. Food aid deliveries have changed over time, notably a rapid increase in emergency food and the decline of government to government “program” food aid. Procurement and usage trends are changing rapidly as well. Table 1 depicts 2004 figures for procurement and distribution.

Table 1: 2004 Global Food Aid Deliveries

| Analysis | Category | Million Metric Tons | Proportion |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Recipient Region | Sub-Saharan Africa | 3.8 | 51% |

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-----|------|
| | Asia | 2.0 | 27% |
| | Latin America/Caribbean | 0.7 | 9% |
| | Other regions | 1.0 | 13% |
| Donor | US | 4.2 | 55% |
| | EC and Member States | 1.5 | 20% |
| | Japan | 0.6 | 8% |
| | Other | 1.2 | 17% |
| Category | Emergency | 4.4 | 59% |
| | Project | 2.1 | 28% |
| | Program | 1.0 | 13% |
| Commodity | Cereals | 6.5 | 87% |
| | Non-Cereals | 1.0 | 13% |
| Procurement | Local Purchase | 1.1 | 15% |
| | Triangular Transaction | 0.9 | 12% |
| | Direct Transfer | 5.5 | 73% |
| Distribution | Sales (monetization) | 2.0 | 27% |
| | Distribution | 5.5 | 73% |
| TOTAL | | 7.5 | 100% |

Source WFP

INTERFAIS

Three major factors affecting the future of food aid

Governance

Global mechanisms and institutions that govern the allocation, utilization, and reporting of food aid resources are in disarray, and some are outdated and dysfunctional. Recent proposals have varied from a call for a complete overhaul of these mechanisms (Barrett and Maxwell, 2006) to specific reforms of each given institution (Konandreas, 2004). This review touches briefly on three issues: the Food Aid Convention and the associated institution within FAO—the Consultative Sub-Committee of Surplus Disposal; negotiations currently underway at the World Trade Organization Committee on Agriculture; and strengthening and broadening the role of Codes of Conduct.

1. The Food Aid Convention. The Food Aid Convention (FAC), originally drafted in 1967, was renewed in 1999 and expired in 2002 with on-going annual renewals, may be renegotiated in the coming year. In its current form the FAC has numerous shortcomings and has been described elsewhere as outdated, and ineffective (Barrett and Maxwell, 2006). Its associated institutions, especially the FAO Consultative Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal (CSSD), are in equal need of substantial overhaul in both structure and objectives (Konandreas, 2005). The FAC includes a legal agreement on minimum tonnage obligations of donors, but has no mechanism for effectively monitoring or enforcing signatories' compliance, and the minima are routinely now ignored. In addition, the membership of FAC consists only of donor countries—it cannot address issues that involve recipient governments or operational

agencies. Though the tonnage minima were intended to make the availability of food aid at least somewhat counter-cyclical, the evidence remains overwhelming that food aid is strongly pro-cyclical: more food aid is available when prices are lower—i.e. when, globally at least, food assistance is less required. The CSSD is also routinely ignored by its donor members. Only about five percent of 2000-2 global food aid flows were reported under CSSD's required notification mechanism (Barrett and Maxwell 2005).

Proposals to renew the FAC continuing to include combining tonnage and cash minima; expanding the membership to include not only donors, but also recipient country governments and operational agencies; and providing for stronger conflict resolutions and enforcement mechanisms to ensure accountability (Barrett and Maxwell 2006) but it is not clear whether there is the political will to take on any of these issues. How the FAC is renegotiated will partially determine the level of availability and the global accountability of food aid.

2. The World Trade Organization. Much of the current debate about governance mechanisms for food aid is currently taking place in the Committee on Agriculture of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Technically the WTO does not oversee food aid operations, but given the debate over export subsidies, it is inevitable that the WTO will play a greater oversight role in the future in terms of trade displacement (Clay 2006).

Major issues include the form in which food aid is made available (i.e. in the form of loans or pure grants—which the latter being the preferred option by many countries), and the “tying status” of food aid (Clay, Riley and Urey, 2004). Tying status refers to mandates about the markets from which food aid may be sourced. While many major donors, including the European Commission and Canada, have “untied” their food aid in recent years—meaning that they provide cash for purchase of food for assistance rather than donating it in-kind—US food aid remains tied to its own domestic markets. The debate in the Committee on Agriculture is also over cotton, state trading enterprises, domestic support payments, and export subsidies, but the European view is that “tied” US food aid exports amount to an export subsidy in disguise. Both EC subsidies and US food aid exports are viewed by many member states as trade-distorting (Clay 2006). The view of the US (and many agencies engaged in food aid operations) is that any attempt to “untie” US food aid contributions would result in the loss of political support from powerful US agri-business and shipping interests—and hence a substantial reduction of US contributions of food aid.

A compromise suggested to prevent a drastic decline in emergency response resources was introduced in the Hong Kong Declaration in December 2005 to include a “safe box” for bona fide food aid for emergency response (Clay 2006). If adopted, this would exempt emergency food aid from disciplines that may be applied to other categories. However, this raised the thorny question of what defines an “emergency,” who can declare an emergency and how long does an emergency last? WFP itself has done quite a lot of work on this question (WFP, 2005), and indeed, although not cited as such, WFP's definition appears to have been adopted by the US delegation in their most recent communiqué (Committee on Agriculture, 2006)

There is general agreement that local and regional purchase should be the first option, but disagreement over who may declare an emergency, whether food aid must be in fully grant form, and over the controversial practice of monetization (Clay, 2006). And there is no agreement about tied food aid that is not for declared emergencies. It is unclear how soon an Agreement on Agriculture will come out. The US administration has so-called “fast-track” approval authority until later this year—giving a time ultimatum to negotiators. Calm heads

may yet prevail in the WTO discussions, and there could be significant changes forthcoming. But at this point it is difficult to predict the outcome.

3. Codes of conduct. Voluntary codes of conduct are the major governance device for operational agencies. These include the NGO Food Aid Code of Conduct (EuronAid, 1995), the IFRC/NGO Code of Conduct in Disaster Response (IFRC 1995), the Sphere Guidelines (Sphere Project 2004), and the more recently concluded Voluntary Guidelines on the Implementation of the Right to Adequate Food. Work under the good humanitarian donorship initiative has helped to extend codes of conduct to donors. While these codes have helped to promote the humanitarian imperative of protecting lives and alleviating suffering, much remains to be done to implement them. With regard to food aid, this includes particularly the elements of:
 - ***Allocation on the basis of need, vulnerability and impartiality.*** The provision of food assistance should be on the basis of assessed need, not geopolitical or commercial considerations. There is ample evidence that food aid is not currently allocated on this basis (Darcy and Hoffman, 2003).
 - ***Operations backed by appropriate analysis.*** As noted, poorly managed food aid can do damage. Improved analysis is necessary to address the inappropriate use of food aid (Maxwell and Watkins 2003).
 - ***Appropriate utilization and management of resources.*** Food aid should be used only where appropriate, and operational agencies must ensure the appropriate targeting of food aid. Donors and operational agencies should commit to addressing not only food needs but also the complementary inputs (e.g., water, medicines) in a flexible and predictable way to ensure that assistance has the intended impact.
 - ***Clarity of obligations and accountability of stakeholders.*** Codes focus mostly on the role of operational agencies. The obligations of donors, national governments, and recipient communities are not clearly specified.

In the operational day-to-day operations of a WFP Country Office, it might be easy to dismiss as unimportant the more remote, global governance mechanisms outlined above—particularly in light of the fact that some have been fairly dysfunctional of late. But each of the above will have a significant impact on operations, and it will be important for managers at the program level to keep informed about changes.

Donor Trends

At least three key donor trends can be identified—and these will continue to shape the nature of food aid programming in the foreseeable future. These include declining resource levels and a strong priority to emergency programming; growing preference for local and regional purchase; and the need for greater complementarity with cash programming.

1. Trends in resource availability by category. Overall, levels of food aid have been declining steadily—from an average of 12-15 million metric tons in the late 1980s and early 90s to 7.5 MMT in 2004 as Table 1 depicts. There has been a much greater focus on emergencies and a marked decline in government to government or “program” food aid. Table 1 underlines the extent of this trend at the present. This has inevitably meant declining food aid resources for development, with greater concentration of these resources in fewer countries. In 2005, there was a substantial shortfall in resources for emergency food assistance, and the trend so far in 2006 is not encouraging—manifested nowhere more graphically than in the cuts for Sudan.

Between “relief” and “development” there is an emergent gray area around social protection and safety nets, and around disaster risk reduction and mitigation. In some contexts, notably Ethiopia, donors and national governments have put enormous effort into separating chronically vulnerable groups from disaster-affected groups, dealing with the former as a safety net issue, and the latter as a humanitarian response issue (Maxwell, 2002; Marchione and Novick, 2003; Devereux, Sharp and Amare 2003). While programmatically, these categories might look similar in terms of interventions, the causal factors are different, and the former category is relatively predictable—and thus donors can allocate resources without waiting for assessments and appeals. This reduces considerably the level of unpredictability in allocations and pipelines, and hopefully, makes appropriate humanitarian response quicker as well.

Another trend is the apparent decline of food aid for development and particularly monetization. Monetization was the dominant practice with program food aid, and became the major use of development food aid by American NGOs in the 1990s (Barrett and Maxwell 2005). Given the overall shortfall of resources for emergency response, the available resources for monetization have declined in recent years. WFP is not involved in monetization, and US agencies are now split on whether monetization is still a useful practice, but there is little question about the declining trend in resources.

2. Trends in procurement. Table 1 also notes a significant trend towards more cash resources for local/regional purchase. In 2004 year, 55% of all food aid was of US origin, and all that was sourced from US markets. This means that a substantial proportion of the remainder of the world’s food aid is purchased in local or regional markets. Indeed, in Africa, Sudan supplies the second largest amount of locally procured food aid of all countries. If well managed, local or regional purchase has a number of advantages over food aid purchased in and shipped from the donor country itself: given shorter distances to ship, it can be quicker response in emergencies and it can be more cost-efficient (and hence partially helps to address the resource shortfall issue); it can also be less trade-distorting and can support market development objectives in developing countries. However, if poorly managed, local and regional purchase might have none of these effects, and indeed have counter-productive impacts on markets (Murphy and McAfee, 2005). It is not a panacea for all that ails food aid, but it is certainly an increasingly important means of procurement, with potential to have important developmental secondary impacts (CARE 2005). It is imperative that operational agencies become more adept at managing local purchase.

The US administration is proposing (against significant political opposition in Congress) to increase the amount of locally and regionally procured food in the US food aid portfolio as part of the US Farm Bill now being negotiated—the authorizing legislation behind the US food aid portfolio. But for obvious reasons, the practice runs afoul of the interests of both agribusiness companies that procure and supply US food aid. NGOs, at least in principle, support local and regional purchase, but the political trade-offs remain to be seen, and in some ways are tied to WTO negotiations. Given the dominance of the US among food aid donors, the outcome of this process may be the single biggest factor affecting the future of food aid.

3. Complementarity of food and cash. While local and regional purchase requires cash rather than in-kind commodities, the cash is still earmarked for the purchase of food. Among some European and private donors, there is a recent trend towards more cash-oriented interventions rather than in-kind aid (ODI 2005). This stems from the (seemingly obvious) observation that vulnerable households have needs beyond simply food. In contexts where markets

function, there is strong evidence that cash inputs are a more effective means of helping such vulnerable households. The tsunami response in particular brought a lot of experience with direct cash rather than in-kind assistance—given that the disaster itself didn't destroy nearby markets and production infrastructure, and given the unprecedented rate of private, cash donations to humanitarian agencies. US aid is still dominated by in-kind resources. Nevertheless, there will be an increasing trend toward to utilization of cash resources to complement food aid. Sorting out the appropriate mix of cash and in-kind assistance constitutes a significant challenge.

Best Practices

Best practices can be separated into five related but distinct categories. This brief listing is necessarily a general summary with a few highlights—not an exhaustive explication of all possible areas. As a general theme, however, much of the emergent best practice in food aid programming revolves around improving analysis tying better analysis to improved program design, implementation and monitoring/evaluation. This sounds like straight-forward good programming in any kind of humanitarian or developmental intervention, but given the myriad of contextual factors, governance restrictions and donor politics—not to mention complex logistical considerations and the relative inflexibility of food as a resource—it is often anything but a straight-forward exercise to improve programming on the ground. The extent to which WFP and its implementing partner agencies are able to incorporate these best practices into operations constitutes the third major factor determining the future of food aid. This brief review highlights information systems; emerging analytical imperatives; program design and implementation innovations, focusing particularly improved targeting; and improvements in supply chain management.

1. Information systems. Food aid programs have historically been resource-driven, not analysis driven. While this is changing, the critical step by which to reverse this historical trend is to improve the information available to food aid managers. In the 1980s and 1990s, with the advent of early warning systems, information systems were still intricately linked to food aid as the default response. It is only comparatively recently that we have come to see information systems in a more holistic way, broadening responses beyond just food, but also integrating different elements of basic vulnerability analysis, monitoring contextual and household trends (early warning in the specific sense), needs assessment, and response alternatives analysis (Maxwell and Watkins, 2003; FSAU, 2006). Linked to improved program monitoring and evaluation, information systems now offer the possibility of evidence-based decision making by food aid managers—in theory enabling the food aid to be used only where it is the appropriate resource—and matching complementary interventions to the use of food for improved humanitarian or poverty reduction impact. In practice, we still have a long ways to go to realize the full benefit of improved information systems (Darcy and Hoffman, 2003). WFP has been a critical actor in improving information systems, particularly in the area of vulnerability assessment, and more recently with the SENAC initiative (WFP 2005).

Among practices that still require attention is the guarantee of separation of information generation and analysis from operations and operational budgets. Having information systems tied directly to either to resource donor or an operational agency inevitably raises questions about the impartiality and objectivity of the information generated—particularly when information systems are seen as “extras” and their budgets tied to tonnages of food moved. This is slowly changing, and obviously requires donor support in another form. In this region, perhaps Somalia has the most humanitarian information system, and it is not linked directly with either a food aid donor or an operational agency. Clearly, operational

agencies need their own information systems, but they have to be seen by core donors as integral parts of the system, not an extra whose budget is determined by the through put of food aid, and care must be taken to separate information and analysis functions from operational response functions (Maxwell and Watkins, 2003).

2. Analytical tools and methods. Information alone is of course not adequate—better analytical tools are required as well, and many have been generated to analyze food security in the past five years. These include much more emphasis on actual behaviors, on qualitative measures, and on triangulating multiple methods to gain a better understanding of the status and causes of food insecurity—an inherently complex concept to measure. Food economy analysis is probably the best known of these methods, but has been complemented by other, more behavioral observations, in addition to the traditional contextual and market indicators used (Seaman et al. 2000; Maxwell et al 2003). The comparability of seemingly similar data across contexts has continued to confound the rational allocation of resources. The Integrated Phase Classification System, developed in Somalia (FSAU 2006) but in wide usage in the current drought crisis affecting pastoral areas of the Greater Horn, is a significant attempt to draw multiple sources of information into a single analysis of food security and humanitarian needs. The application of this tool highlights contextual differences in the interpretation of food security information and indicates how far we still have to go as industry to achieve a “gold standard” with regard to both indicators used in analysis, and a common definition of to interpret analysis, but it is a major step in the right direction.

An integrated overall understanding of livelihoods has been the most significant change in food security analysis in recent years—and still presents many challenges. While the basic asset categories and most of the dominant livelihood strategy categories are now well known, more recent work has focused on understanding the vulnerability context and the institutional and policy constraints to livelihoods. Other important recent work in this area includes the understanding of so-called “poverty traps”—asset thresholds below which people simply cannot “pull themselves up by their bootstraps,” but which, if people can acquire a basic portfolio of assets, can be overcome (Barrett, Bezuneh and Aboud, 2001). Understanding these thresholds—and figuring out ways to enable vulnerable households and individuals people can and do escape poverty through general economic growth. This work has highlighted the use of food aid as one important input in social protection and safety net programming, which requires understanding the different but often overlapping causes of chronic vulnerability and acute emergencies as noted earlier.

Of equal analytical importance for food aid programming is not only understanding food insecurity itself, but in understanding the impact of programs. Monitoring and evaluation is generally concerned with measuring the intended and beneficial impact of programming. More recently, greater emphasis has been placed on what we have come to call benefits/harms analysis, or looking at unintended or negative impacts as well. First and foremost, with regard to food aid, this has meant understanding the impact of food aid on markets. The SENAC project (Donovan, et al. 2006) has played a leading role in this, but so have other recent studies with regard to Sudan (Abdel Rahman, et al. 2005). The general conclusion is that good analysis can at least limit, if not eliminate, the negative impacts of food aid programming on markets, but that all stakeholders have a long ways to go on improving analysis on this question. The emphasis on understanding markets has highlighted ways in which markets can be beneficially utilized not only in an overall strategy to improve food security, but also for the dissemination of assistance.

Other areas of possible unintended consequences of food assistance that will require a more sophisticated analysis in coming years include its impact on gender relations, on humanitarian protection, and on what is usually labeled “dependency.” Though the latter term means different things in different contexts, it has long been received wisdom that provision of humanitarian assistance, particularly in the context of the chronic emergencies, distorts community and individual incentives—encouraging dependency on food aid rather than on people’s own livelihood strategies. Recent evidence about the impact of food aid tends to refute this commonly-held view—although the reasons for this are that food assistance is usually too little, too late, and too unreliable to enable poor or vulnerable households to simply wait for its arrival rather than continue to seek out alternative sources of income and food (Lentz et al. 2005; Harvey and Lind 2005; Abdulai et al. 2004). While it has been helpful to debunk some of the myths about dependency, the “too little, too late and too unreliable” label tells us how far the humanitarian effort still has to go to significantly impact acute food insecurity.

3. Program design and implementation. There are a numerous issues that arise in a discussion of program design and implementation—possibly the most important is the determination of when food aid actually is the most appropriate resource for addressing food insecurity. Long the default response, more recent work has shown that where markets are functioning reasonably well (itself not always a simple determination) cash transfers are actually a better means of assisting food insecure households. Even in areas where markets don’t function that well, experience with addressing both chronic poverty and even acute emergencies implies that a combination of food and cash—rather than simply food itself—is the best response (Barrett and Maxwell 2005; Devereux 2006). Developing the tools to estimate the appropriate mix of resources is a major challenge, but an imperative for appropriate response.

In the context of emergency operations, improving complementarity between food aid and other humanitarian interventions is an imperative, but remains a major challenge. Food aid routinely dwarfs other forms of assistance, but food aid alone rarely produces the desired result—even in terms of food security or nutritional status. While this to some extent requires donors to be more creative (and more generous!) this also calls for greater efforts by operational agencies to coordinate both design and implementation of programs. Of highest priority would be better complementarity of food assistance with more targeted forms of nutritional support and non-food assistance (Stites et al, 2005). Here the relationships are fairly clearly understood, so at least analytical clarity does not stand in the way of improved programs, but implementation lags far behind—often because of a dearth of resources.

Much remains to be done to improve the complementarity with livelihoods protection and promotion interventions other forms of risk management and mitigation. As already noted, complementarity with the use of cash as an input is important, particularly in safety net contexts and places where markets function well. Disaster risk reduction strategies are increasingly recognized as important in chronically vulnerable areas (Devereux 2006). The use of food aid is only one of several important considerations with regard to risk reduction. Incorporating crop failure insurance—as WFP is attempting to do this year in Ethiopia—with a food/cash based safety net, is one promising innovation (Girmaw 2005). But this is mostly experimental to date, and only for crop failure due to poor rainfall.

4. Targeting. Much has been written about the targeting of food aid, yet it probably remains the biggest single challenge to good program management. It is intricately connected with good information and good analysis, but much of the analysis has focused rather narrowly on the questions of *who* should be targeted, and *where* these people are (Sharp, 2001; Barrett 2003).

But more broadly, targeting also should include the questions of what should be targeted, *when* and *for how long*, *how much*, and *by what means*? The logic behind the imperative of good targeting is simple: first food aid is a scarce resource—for maximum impact, it must get to the people who need it most, in the right amount at the right time. Resource efficiency is critical in times of declining resources. But to prevent the unintended consequences of food aid—displaced trade and production disincentives, labor supply disincentives, diversion, etc.—food aid must also not go to people who do not need it (Barrett 2003; Barrett and Maxwell 2005).

The limited research on this topic is not encouraging—there is ample evidence of both exclusion errors (failing to target people who really need assistance) and inclusion errors (targeting people who really do not need the assistance). The industry has a long ways to go to ensure adequate targeting, a concern even more difficult in complex emergencies where there are access and security problems. Even where vulnerable groups are clearly identified, other issues arise—the most critical of which is timing. How often has food aid arrived at harvest time—after the hungry season has ended and just in time to undermine the prices farmers get for their crops? Research shows that the average time from a call forward to delivery in country for US food aid—which is relatively speedy compared to European food aid—is nearly five months (Barrett and Maxwell, 2005). Early warning and supply chain management innovations have helped to reduce delays and ensure supplies during that interim, but as long as food has to be shipped long distances, the timing of food aid deliveries, as well as the amount and length of time provided, results in serious exclusion and inclusion targeting errors.

There is some emerging consensus on the “*by what means?*” question. Administrative and indicator-based targeting require not only very good information, but also enormous investment of staff time and money. Self-targeting sometimes works—particularly with food for work—but has often been shown to exclude the most vulnerable because it is predicated on the presumption of surplus labor which the most vulnerable often do not have (McCaston, 1999). Community-based targeting works well in contexts where there is well defined local governance and where widespread displacement is not an issue (Jaspars and Shoham, 1999). Community-based targeting in complex emergencies almost invariably results in universal coverage, and in many documented cases, there are real differences in the criteria of vulnerability between the distributing agency and the recipient community. A review of the targeting literature generally reveals that there are no universal recommendations with regard to targeting. The only general tendency is to focus first geographic targeting—get food assistance quickly to areas suffering a problem—and to focus on whatever methods work at the household level, often using a combination of methods (Barrett and Maxwell, 2005). Greater efforts are needed in the timing and quantity elements of good targeting.

5. Supply chain management. Many innovations in supply chain management have improved the timeliness and management of food aid, although many of these aren't necessarily very recent. Pre-positioning of food aid, either in strategic reserves or in local warehouses, now routinely provides the resources to cover a gap between the time needs are identified and requested resources arrive. But strategic reserves don't always work as intended (Maxwell, 2002) and have been subject to political manipulation, often complicating emergencies (Devereux 2002). Local and regional purchase, already discussed above, is a more recent procurement innovation that also has the potential to reduce the time between identification of needs and provision of assistance.

What does this mean for future programming for Sudan?

Sudan is likely to continue to require food assistance for the foreseeable future. The availability, flexibility and accountability of food aid resources will be determined by the outcome of various negotiations related to the governance of global food aid allocation, procurement and distribution mechanisms. The impacts of donor trends have already been acutely felt in Sudan in the past two months. But it is arguable that if substantial reforms are enacted, it will help to address some of the donor constraints. Advocacy for appropriate resources and appropriate amounts of resources will probably increasingly be part of doing business in Sudan, or indeed in any chronic complex emergency. WFP has been at the forefront of advocating for food resources for emergencies—a role that will no doubt continue. A major challenge is to advocate for the appropriate resources for the context, whether acute emergency, chronic crisis, or long-term poverty. And advocacy for more appropriate governance mechanisms is a joint task for WFP and other operational agencies that may often make joint appeals for more resources, but only occasionally collaborate on other important advocacy issues.

Meeting the demands of the emergent best practices in a country so vast, with such a diversity of contexts, will be an enormous challenge, requiring good information and analysis, diligent management, and well-equipped partner agencies. Given the diversity of the country, different modes of operation (acute emergency, recovery and transition, safety nets, etc.) are likely to be required at the same time. But also given the diversity of the country, there is significant scope for local purchase within Sudan, enabling quicker response, with more locally preferred food. WFP Sudan already has a track record for local purchase for both domestic (Sudan) consumption and for emergency operations in neighboring countries. Building on the lessons learned from this experience to engage more broadly in local purchase is both an important challenge and an opportunity for WFP Sudan.

Improving information systems, analysis, program design and targeting, while maintaining good supply chain mechanisms, will be key areas for WFP and its partners in operations on the ground. Managing these multiple demands in the context of different programming contexts will no doubt constitute the major challenges facing WFP and other operational agencies in Sudan.

References

- Abdulai, A., Barrett, C. and Hoddinott, J. (2005). "Does food aid *really* have disincentive effects? New evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa." *World Development*, 33 (10), 1689-1704.
- Abdul-Rahman, H. Salih, A., Bradley, S. Couteaudier, T. El Haj, M. Hussein, M, Steffen P. (2005). Markets, Livelihoods and Food Aid in Darfur: A Rapid Assessment and Programming Recommendations." USAID/FAO/EC, Khartoum.
- Barrett, C. (2003). "Food Aid Effectiveness: 'It's the Targeting, Stupid!'" Paper prepared for WFP, Cornell University, Ithaca.
- Barrett, C. and D. Maxwell (2005). *Food Aid After Fifty Years: Recasting Its Role* (London: Routledge).
- Barrett, C. and D. Maxwell (2005). "Towards A Global Food Aid Compact." *Food Policy*. 31 (2006), 105–118.
- Barrett, C. Bezuneh, M. and Aboud, A. (2001). "Income Diversification, Poverty Traps and Policy Shocks in Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya." *Food Policy*, 26(4), 367-384.
- CARE (2005). A Review of Local and Regional Purchase Operations. Report prepared for the Food Resources Coordination Team. CARE, Atlanta.
- Clay, E. (2006). "The Post Hong Kong Challenge: Building on Developing Country Proposals for a Future Food Aid Regime. ODI Background Paper #2. ODI, London.
- Clay, E. Riley, B. and Urey, I. (2004), "The Development Effectiveness of Food Aid And The Effects Of Its Tying Status", Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee, Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and Donor Practices, Report DCD/DAC/EFF(2004)9.
- Committee on Agriculture (2006) "United States Communication on Food Aid." WTO/CoA, Geneva.
- Darcy, J. and Hofmann, C. (2003). *According to Need? Needs assessment and decision making in the humanitarian sector*. Humanitarian Policy Group Report 15. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Devereux, S. (2006). "Identification of Methods for Emergency Assessments to Distinguish Between Chronic and Transitory Food Insecurity, and to Evaluate the Effects of Shocks." SENAC Project, World Food Programme, Emergency Needs Assessment Branch, Rome.
- Devereux, S., Sharp K. and Amare, Y. (2003) 'Destitution in Wollo, Ethiopia', *IDS Research Report 55*, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.
- Devereux, S. (2002). *The Malawi Famine of 2002: Causes, Consequences and Policy Lessons*. Brighton: IDS.
- Donovan, C., McGlinchy, M. Staatz, J. and Tschirley, D. (2006). "Emergency Needs Assessments and the Impact of Food Aid on Local Markets." SENAC Project, World Food Programme, Emergency Needs Assessment Branch, Rome.
- EuronAid (1995). *NGO Code of Conduct on Food Aid and Food Security*. Brussels: EuronAid.
- Food Security Analysis Unit for Somalia (2006) "The Integrated Phase Classification System" FSAU, Nairobi.
- Girmaw, Y (2005). "Can insurance break Ethiopia's vicious cycle of hunger?" WFP, Addis Ababa, (mimeo).

- Harvey, P. and Lind, J. (2005). "Dependency and Humanitarian Relief: A Critical Analysis" London, ODI.
- Jaspars, S. and Shoham, J. (1999). "Targeting the Vulnerable: a Review of the Necessity and Feasibility of Targeting Vulnerable Households." *Disasters*, 23(4), 359-372.
- Konandreas, P. (2005), "Multilateral mechanisms governing food aid and the need for an enhanced role of the CSSD in the context of the new WTO disciplines on agriculture." FAO working paper, Rome.
- Lentz, E. Barrett C. and Hoddinott J. (2005). "Food Aid and Dependency: Implications for Emergency Food Security Assessments." SENAC Project, World Food Programme, Emergency Needs Assessment Branch, Rome
- Maxwell, D. (2002) 'Why do famines persist? A brief review of Ethiopia 1999–2000', *IDS Bulletin*, 33: 48–54.
- Maxwell D. and Watkins, B. (2003). "Humanitarian Information Systems and Emergencies in the Greater Horn of Africa: Logical Components and Logical Linkages". *Disasters*, 27(2), 72-90.
- Marchione, T. and Novick, P. (2003) 'Famine prevention framework for Ethiopia: decreasing vulnerability – building a resiliency safety net', Addis Ababa: USAID.
- McCaston, K. (1999). "The Shortcomings of Food Aid Targeting: Food-for-Work Programs and Human Energy Expenditure." Society for Applied Anthropology, Tucson, 1999.
- Murphy S. and McAfee B. (2005), *U.S. Food Aid: Time To Get It Right* (Minneapolis: Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy).
- Overseas Development Institute (2005). "Cash and Emergency Relief: Conference Report." ODI, London.
- Sphere Project (2004). *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Revised Edition.)* Oxfam Publishing / Sphere Project.
- Stites, E., Young, H. Titus S. and Walker P. (2005) "Non Food Responses to Food Insecurity in Emergencies." SENAC Project, World Food Programme, Emergency Needs Assessment Branch, Rome
- World Food Program (2005). "Consolidated Framework of WFP Policies: Updated Version." Executive Board, Second Regular Session, WFP, Rome.
- World Food Program (2005). "Interim Review of the SENAC Project." WFP, Rome.