

## **TOWARDS THE POST- 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: THE PERFORMANCE OF FOOD SECURITY POLICIES AND STRATEGIES IN UGANDA AS A CASE OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

As Millions of people's lives become considered to have improved due to concerted global, regional, national and local efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the new perspective apparently focuses on global development agenda. By 2015, research and development evaluations suggested that substantial MDG targets had already been met in areas of reducing poverty, increasing access to improved drinking water sources, improving the lives of slum dwellers and achieving gender parity in primary school. Additional targets, such as access to technologies, reduction of average tariffs, debt relief, and growing political participation by women, showed great progress.

While an account of these achievements is traceable over the last two decades, there are still remarkable challenges regarding the achievement of MDG-1 that targeted to reduce extreme poverty and hunger that is witnessed in persistent substantial numbers of stunted and chronically malnourished children. In the endeavor to meet MDG-1, Uganda employed several strategies including the Uganda National Food and Nutrition Policy (UNFNP 2003), the Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP II, 2005-2010), the Uganda Food and Nutrition Strategy and Investment Plan (UFNSIP, 2005) the Uganda National Development Plan (NDP, 2010) as well as the 5-year Uganda Nutrition Action Plan (UNAP, 2011-2016). Despite all these efforts, there is evidence of food insecurity, malnutrition and stuntedness still prevalent in the country. As a case of Sub-Saharan Africa, this evaluative and descriptive research aimed at assessing the performance of Uganda food security policies and strategies in order to draw related conclusions for the POST- 2015 Development Agenda.

***Key words: Development Agenda, Millennium Development Goals, Food Security, POST- 2015 Development Agenda***

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Post-2015 Development Agenda is a process spearheaded by the United Nations that aims to help define the future global development framework that will succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). At the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit held between 25th -27th September 2015 at the UN headquarters in New York, over 150 world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development that includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 targets to fight poverty, end hunger, fight inequality and tackle climate change.

The aim of the SDGs is to build on the MDGs and thus complete what was not achieved. Key principles have to be put into consideration to support the successful implementation of the new development agenda: participation, inclusion, and the need for strengthened capacities and partnerships. The targets include: Strengthening capacities and building effective institutions, localizing the agenda, participatory monitoring and accountability, partnerships with civil society, engaging with the private sector, and cultural development. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) will support governments around the world in tackling the new agenda and taking it forward over the next fifteen years.

As the world sets out to focus on the Global Development Agenda, it is important to evaluate the achievements and weaknesses of the strategies and targets that were set to achieve the MDGs before a feasible roadmap can be laid in this new development agenda. An account of achievements traceable over the last two decades of MDG focus, leave remarkable challenges with some of the goals and targets, including those on maternal and child health, access to sanitation and the environment, as well as reducing extreme poverty and hunger. However, the lessons learnt provide a framework for working towards accelerating progress. This therefore implies that any post-2015 development framework should aim at completion of the unfinished business of the MDGs, and capitalize on the knowledge accumulated. It is possible that the credibility of a new set of global development goals depends on demonstrating concrete success with the MDGs, and on building and sustaining MDG progress. Indeed, the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) tool benchmarks including targets and indicators, and relevant interventions are meant to help countries to set a robust baseline for measuring development progress beyond 2015 (UNAP, 2011-2016).

## 2. METHODOLOGY

A desk research was conducted through document analysis and secondary data that helped to evaluate the food security policies and strategies used to achieve the MDG-1 (Reducing hunger and poverty by 2015) in Uganda. The secondary data on the progress report for the Millennium Development Goals together with the new framework for the post-2015 agenda provide a basis for critical analysis of Uganda performance in the food security cause.

## 3. PERFORMANCE OF MDGS IN UGANDA

It is recognizable that substantial MDG achievements have been globally registered since 1990s including reducing extreme poverty by half, averting deaths from malaria and tuberculosis, Access to an improved drinking water source, narrowing disparities in primary school enrolment between boys and girls, increasing political participation of women and sustaining favorable trade systems for developing countries (UN, 2014). Uganda falls within the category of other nations that have made important progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The 2013 MDG progress report on Uganda shows a remarkable improvement since the previous report of 2010. Most notably, is the achievement on MDG1—halving the proportion of people below the national poverty line – where observable poverty gap is said to have been reduced across all regions of the country. The achievement on economic growth has been closely linked to an expansion in more secure and productive forms of employment for poorer households and has therefore benefited Ugandans across the income distribution. (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, September 2010; September 2014). While this achievement has been realized, however, Uganda overall performance in the attainment of MDG goals at a glance creates a mixed feeling on the likely achievements in the Post - 2015 Development Agenda as illustration 1 appended suggests.

The Uganda's MDG summary as of 2013 report shows a good progress with substantial targets being on track. However, it also indicates that specific areas within the broader goals such as completion rates under universal primary education as well as half of the targets within environmental sustainability are being consistently slow. Yet achievements in areas like productive employments and descent work in MDG 1 as well as assessing improvement relating to slum dwellers lives under MDG7 cannot be detected without prior clearly developed targets for assessment. In our view, we consider all these factors as essential to understand the post-2015 development agenda but we will specifically focus on explaining MDG 1 as an area of interest for this discussion. Since MDG 1 has 3 broader objectives, we shall concentrate on objective 1c to assess the policies and strategies adopted by Uganda to alleviate hunger in the set target frame of the last two and a half decades.

## 4. THE CONCEPT OF FOOD SECURITY

As per the Food Agricultural Organization (FAO)'s definition, food security refers to ensuring that people at all times have access to the food they need for a healthy and active life while the World Bank defines food security as “access by all people at all times to enough food for a healthy active life.” The most important elements here are the “availability of food” and the “ability to acquire it” (FAO, 2009). According to Grebmer, (2011) food availability is the physical existence of food stocks in desired

quantities. He contends that physical availability in any location within a nation depends on storage and transport infrastructure and market integration within the national territory. Access is determined by the bundle of entitlements, related to people's initial endowments, what they can acquire (especially in terms of physical and economic access to food) and the opportunities open to them to achieve entitlement sets with enough food either through their own endeavours or through State intervention or both. Absorption is defined as the ability to biologically utilize the food consumed. This is in turn related most crucially to the availability of safe drinking water, sanitation, a hygienic environment, primary healthcare and also to nutritional knowledge and appropriate practices (Von Grebmer, 2011).

From the definition of food security, it can be noted that food availability addresses the supply side of food security and can be determined by the level food stocks available at the household level and at the national level plus the level of food production. However, adequate supply of food at the national or international level may not guarantee household food security. Even at the household level, food may be available but not accessible to all household members. As noted above, accessibility is basically determined by the endowments and opportunities open to household members to have access to this food. Further still, food security is attained when the consumed food has been utilized by the body- when the body makes the best of the nutrients in the food. This can be determined by feeding practices, food preparation, diversity of the diet and intra-household distribution of food combined with good biological utilization of the food consumed (Von Grebmer, 2011). All this determines nutritional status of individuals. When analyzing food security, it is not enough to look at availability, accessibility and utilization only. It is also important to assess if the food intake is adequate today and whether it will be adequate in the future (FAO, 2006). The knowledge from this analysis influences the nature, extent and urgency of the interventions needed to avert the problem. These are some of the key argument that may explain why hunger situation may continue looming even in the event the improvements gained under Millennium Development Goal 1

4.1 The State of Food Security: A global and local perspective

Available data on the State of Food Insecurity in the world over indicates that under nourished people in the developing world decreased since the 1990. However, FAO report (2006) estimated persistent undernourished population of close to 854 million people; with over 60% of the world's undernourished people in Asia, and a quarter in Africa. Relatedly, the 2009 FAO figures indicated that 16 of the 22 countries with over 35% undernourishment prevalence rate were in Africa. The 2015 FAO report on the state of food insecurity in the world estimates that 795 million people are undernourished though the prevalence of undernourishment has reduced by 18.6% in 1990-1992 to 10.9% in 2014-2016. The number of undernourished people has thus slightly reduced by 49 million people comparing the 2006 with the 2015 FAO estimates on the state of global food insecurity (FAO, 2016). The recent state of food insecurity basing on the 2015 hunger report takes into stock the progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG 1) and the World Food Summit hunger targets in the transition to the new post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda (FAO, IFAD & WFP 2015). Though this assessment presents a positive trend, dietary quality remains a concern.

The problem of food security in Uganda, like most of Africa has persisted over the years as evidenced by major studies done on the food security situation in the country. For instance Bridge (2006) reveal that Malnutrition accounted for 40% of all child deaths in Uganda, augmenting the United Nations World Food Program Food Security & Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) data which showed that 6 per cent of Ugandan households were food insecure and 21% were moderately food insecure and at risk of becoming food insecure if conditions deteriorated (McKinney, 2009). This collaborates the latter findings that the prevalence of childhood anemia exceeded 70% (WFP, 2011) which could be attributed to the same malnutrition cause.

The 2008-09 Uganda Census of Agriculture revealed that 57% of the 3.6 million surveyed agricultural households reported periods in the previous 12 months when they were unable to maintain consumption at a normal level (UCA, 2010). In 2010,

the World Food Programme (WFP) Uganda and the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) conducted yet another comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis and found out that 48% of Ugandans were food energy deficient, 1/3 of Ugandan children were stunted and the rate was 'serious' in western Uganda at 42% (UBOS, 2010). The 2013 CFSVA in Uganda further indicated that almost half of Ugandans were food energy deficient at 48% between September 2009 and August 2010. The survey further indicated that food insecurity in Uganda is more of a rural phenomenon across all the food security indicators. According to this survey, the poorest households in rural Uganda were the most dependent on purchasing their food making them highly vulnerable to food price rises for the foods they need to buy.

Since Ugandans are fairly market dependent, it contributes to households' vulnerability to food insecurity if food prices rise sharply. Smallholder farmers' produce that dominate the local economy lack proper storage facilities. Limited access to credit and sources of income compel these farmers to sell their surpluses immediately after harvest. Consequently, the marketing chains are long with a number of intermediaries operating between farmers in producing areas and consumers. This situation coupled with technological challenges, agricultural natural calamities, social cultural barriers including land ownership and management plus the global economy crises like the recent credit crunch put low comparative advantage sub-Saharan African countries at a greater risk of food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition. This necessitates policy strategic approaches to avert the situation and to realize the post-2015 agenda

#### 4.2 Uganda's Food security Policies and Strategies

In the endeavor to meet MDG-1, Uganda employed several strategies including the Uganda National Food and Nutrition Policy (UNFNP), which was approved in 2003, targeting improvements in food security, nutrition and incomes for all Ugandans. The Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP) II of 2005-2010 aimed to reduce child hunger and emphasized micronutrient Supplements (McKinney, 2009). Another policy targeting food security is the Uganda Food and Nutrition Strategy and Investment Plan (UFNSIP), which was enacted in 2005. The Uganda National Development Plan (NDP) of 2010 also provides for interventions to improve overall nutrition of Ugandans. A recent and

important milestone is the development and passing of the 5-year Uganda Nutrition Action Plan (UNAP) for 2011-2016. Despite all this, food insecurity is still prevalent in the country as already seen in the state of food security in Uganda. According to (Von Grebmer, 2011), Uganda has a Global Hunger Index (GHI) score of 16.7, placing it 42nd out of 81 countries ranked in 2011.

In order to evaluate the performance of the above food security policies in Uganda, it is prudent to assess the environment from which these policies and programmes are formulated and implemented. This can be realized by looking at the country's legislation, policy, programmes, administrative measures and resources allocated for the realization of the right to food. It is also relevant to identify the constraints for implementing these laws, policies and programmes.

Since the early 1990s, Uganda Government has made several pronouncements and international commitments to address the problem of food insecurity including very specific commitments in the 1995 Constitution. Objective XIV of the 1995 Constitution states that

“The State Shall endeavour to fulfill the fundamental rights of all Ugandans to social justice and economic development and shall, in particular ensure that; (a) all development efforts are directed at ensuring the maximum social and cultural wellbeing of people; and (b) all Ugandans enjoy rights and opportunities and access to education, health services, clean and safe water, work, decent shelter, adequate clothing, food security, pension and retirements.”

While XXII states that:

“The State shall, (a) take appropriate steps to encourage people to grow and store adequate food; (b) establish national food reserves; and (c) encourage and promote proper nutrition through mass education and other appropriate means in order to build a healthy State.”

However, the right to food is recognized in the non-legally binding section on National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy (NODPSP) of the 1995 Constitution but not expressly implied in the same Constitution (Omara, 2007); (Rukundo, 2007).

By not being considered in Chapter four of the of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Ugandan (the Bill of Rights section), the right to food and related Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR) are therefore interpreted as mere statutory objectives with no legally binding provision for remedy and recourse mechanisms (Omara, 2007). This lack of a comprehensive and integrative law or Constitutional provision that expressly recognizes and specifies the State's obligations in realizing the right to adequate food in Uganda poses a challenge in the realization of the MDG-1

In 2000, the Government of Uganda adopted the

Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) as a holistic strategic framework for eradicating rural poverty through multi-sectoral interventions enabling people to improve their livelihoods in a sustainable manner. The PMA reaffirmed Uganda's commitment to develop a comprehensive framework to set national priorities and adopt strategies for ensuring national food security. This was in line with the MDG-1 that targeted to reduce extreme poverty and hunger that is witnessed in persistent substantial numbers of stunted and chronically malnourished children. Although this was also in line with the MDG-1, Arthur Mpeirwe & Davis Ddamulira (2002) argue that the strategic and national security importance of food security was not reflected in the draft of the policy under the auspices of the National Food and Nutrition Council. This was another drawback to the achievement of food security in Uganda.

In the wake of the promising implementation of the Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture in Uganda, Animal Industry and Fisheries tabled a Bill that reinforced the right to food, an integral part of 'Prosperity for All (PFA)'. The 'Food and Nutrition Bill, 2008' sought to set up the legal framework for the implementation of the Uganda Food and Nutrition Policy, 2003 as well as the 'National Food and Nutrition Strategy' completed in 2005. The Food and Nutrition Bill sought to recognize, promote, protect and fulfill the right of everyone to food as fundamental human right. It provided a legal basis for implementing the Uganda Food and Nutrition Policy. The Bill sought to drawing up of strategies to respond to food and nutrition concerns at all levels of Government. This bill raised hope for many Ugandans on the issue of solving the food insecurity problem in the country but this hope was short-lived

in that the bill has taken long time before it can be tabled in parliament so that it can be made into law.

The Uganda Food and Nutrition Policy (UFNP), which expressly recognizes the right to food, was developed and adopted in July 2003 by a multisectoral Food and Nutrition Council (UFNC), with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries (MAAIF) and the Ministry of Health (MOH) as the line ministries for its implementation, in coordination with other stakeholders (MAAIF and MOH, 2003). This was a positive development towards the achievement of MDG-1 but the Food and Nutrition Bill has delayed to be tabled into parliament. With its continued absence, the right to food recognized in the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, and in the Uganda Food and Nutrition Policy (UFNP), remains to be vulnerable and legally incapacitated. A review of the 'business' (legislations) transacted in the 8th Parliament of Uganda from July 2006 to September 2007 indicated that there was no particular debate on the human right to adequate food. A few excerpts relevant to the right to food have been obtained from the Parliament of Uganda archives (Business Transacted in the 1st Session of the 8th Parliament, 2007).

Further still, Alston (1990), notes that the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) that was ratified in 1987 was yet another positive development step in ensuring that people had some protection and rights on several aspects of their lives. However, it took Uganda another sixteen (16) years to adopt the Uganda Food and Nutrition Policy (UFNP) that expressly recognizes the human right to adequate food within the overall framework of poverty eradication (Alston, 1990). Unfortunately, the multisectoral institutional framework for implementing the UFNP – the Uganda Food and Nutrition Council (UFNC), is not yet legally instituted but has been operating as an ad hoc council (Rukundo et al., 2014). This in a way suggests the need to advocate for increased political commitment towards adopting right to food supportive institutions and instruments.

Uganda has not implemented her obligations under the 2003 African Union Summit, Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security, which commits countries to provide not less than 10% budget allocations to agriculture and food security: the Ministry of Agriculture (MAAIF) remains to be among the least funded sectors, receiving less than

5% of the national budget allocations. This chain of omissions indicates that Uganda's duty bearers could have abdicated some of their responsibilities and obligations on the human right to adequate food as specified in international human rights law (Alston, 1990).

Much more remains to be done on how the Right to Food Guidelines (VGs) can be used as practical tools to realize the human right to adequate food within Uganda's environment of poverty and vulnerability. Sector roles identified in the proposed National Food and Nutrition Strategy (NFNS) lack the resources needed for implementation, whereas existing right to food relevant legislation are neither legally binding and nor do they provide for remedy and recourse mechanisms in case of State violations. In spite of the existing opportunities in form of right to food relevant institutional and policy frameworks, there is still a challenge when it comes to the implementation of what is on policy papers. It is difficult to make duty bearers accountable to the rights holders on matters of social protection and safety nets needed to remedy hunger and malnutrition in Uganda.

## 5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above challenges and setbacks, food security policies should link different sectors and there is need to recognize the capacities and institutions of national-level actors such as governments, civil society, and the private sector in the implementation of the new agenda. These requires concerted multiple efforts of all these actors to ensure that they do recognize the transformative agenda and have to implement it with policies and actions tailored to the specific national context.

Not only that but also, there is need for localizing the agenda through emphasis of role of local governments and the embedded diverse local stakeholders whose relationship should be enhanced and attention drawn to invest in capacities and resources at the local level aiming at improved ownership, implementation, monitoring and accountability. Citizens' participation is also seen as a key principle for monitoring and accountability that recognize human rights approaches, while also aiming at strengthening of the quality of policies formulation and implementation over time.

Effective policies should also strengthen local organizations and enhance the voice of the local communities because these communities are the natural custodians of ecosystems and managers of

food production. Ecosystems as productive natural assets should be maintained because they provide important safety nets for the food insecure and they are the basis for diversified livelihoods.

There is need for balanced international trade rules because the current rules have worked against the interests of the world's poorest farmers in developing countries. Trade can make an important contribution to the attainment of global food security but it requires efforts at the multilateral level.

There is need of detailed discussions with sector working groups each year to monitor performance of current programmes and projects geared towards food security attainment. These discussions should identify implementation bottlenecks, inefficiencies in existing operations, and potentially unsustainable imbalances in the size of the recurrent and development programmes. The discussions should also take account of any upcoming policy initiatives in order to ensure that all new policies are comprehensively costed and public resources can be redeployed in accordance with changing strategic priorities; it only requires development of the capacity and willingness to reprioritize spending needs and reallocate expenditures in a disciplined way.

Research on land as an asset vital for achieving food security shows considerable inequality, often resulting from administrative, cultural and political factors more than the operation of the market. The 1993 Land Act in Uganda is designed to strengthen the land rights of the poor. Women's land rights need to be strengthened further since they are key contributors to household and national food security. There is need of public sensitization on a cost-effective structure for land administration and management.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Achieving an ideal right to adequate food situation requires a progressively sustained multi-sectoral intervention, and capacity for continuous preparedness to deal with the dynamics of society and the threats to the right to adequate food within the system. Our discussion has revealed that a number of food and nutrition related policies and activities have been undertaken. These have, however, not met expectations for a number of reasons. Some of the main reasons for failures or under achievements include: inability to mobilize and sensitize the intended beneficiaries, lack of an

effective training and information flow, low capacity of the implementing agencies and collaborators, lack of recourse mechanisms in case of State violation, lack of technical personnel, poor technical approach, lack of/under-developed supportive infrastructures,

poor integration and linkages, limited research, lack of resources/under-funding, lack of legal and regulatory framework, and lack of political commitment and participation.

## Uganda's MDG progress at a Glance

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	
Target 1.A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day	ACHIEVED
Target 1.B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people	NO TARGET
Target 1.C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	ON TRACK
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	
Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	SLOW
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	
Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015	ON TRACK
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	
Target 4.A: Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	ON TRACK
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	
Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	STAGNANT
Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health	SLOW
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	
Target 6.A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	REVERSAL
Target 6.B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it	ON TRACK
Target 6.C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	ON TRACK
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	
Target 7.A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources	SLOW
Target 7.B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss	SLOW
Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation	ON TRACK
Target 7.D: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers	NO TARGET
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development	
Target 8.B: Address the special needs of the least developed countries	SLOW
Target 8.D: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term	ACHIEVED
Target 8.E: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries	ON TRACK
Target 8.F: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications	ON TRACK

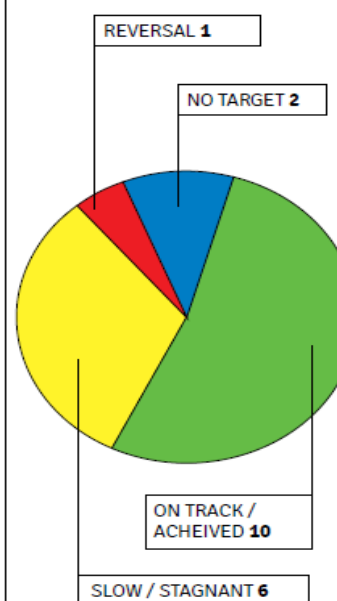


Figure 1 showing Uganda's MDG Progress at a glance

Source: Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development Millennium Development Goals Report for Uganda (September 2013).

United Nations World Food Programme.

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