

IFPRI's Visions

FUTURE SHOULD BE FACED WITH CONFIDENCE

A hunger-free, food-secure world is a central global challenge. In spite of undeniable success stories in the second half of this century, food security, jointly determined by availability of food and access to food, is not yet assured. For more than twenty years, the Washington D.C.-based International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has been dedicated to finding ways of meeting this challenge. In the following article, Prof. Dr. Uwe Holtz, an IFPRI Board of Trustees member, presents IFPRI's visions of future development.

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) sees several interconnected challenges to realizing a food-secure World. The **key challenges** are:

- Widespread poverty and inadequate human resource development, which block people from growing or buying the food they need.
- Large population increases in developing countries, especially in urban areas, which substantially increases food needs and changes food preferences.
- Under-investment in agricultural growth and development, particularly agricultural research.
- Inadequate availability of, and access to, agricultural inputs – such as water and fertilizer.
- Degradation of natural resources such as soil, forests and water.
- Inefficient functioning of markets and inadequate infrastructure.
- Insufficient domestic resource mobilization and declining international assistance.

Since its creation in 1975, IFPRI's mission has been geared towards meeting these challenges. Agriculture is the life-blood of the

IFPRI'S MISSION

- ① IFPRI's mission is to identify and analyse alternative national and international policies for meeting food needs on a sustainable basis, with particular regard for low-income countries and poor people, and for the sound management of the natural resource base that supports agriculture;
- ② to make the results of its research available internationally to all those in a position to apply them or use them; and
- ③ to help strengthen institutions conducting research on food policies and institutions in a position to apply such research results in developing countries.

economy in most developing countries. Since the beginning of the 1990s, IFPRI has raised objections about the decreasing relevance of food security in the national and international development debate, and about the diminishing support that the Official Development Assistance (ODA) gives to the agricultural sector and to agricultural research. IFPRI is concerned about the lack of a long-term vision and a consensus on what action is needed to realize it. This is why, in collaboration with several national and international institutions, it has called for a 2020 Vision.

THE IFPRI 2020 VISION – EVERY PERSON HAS ACCESS TO SUFFICIENT FOOD

In 1995, IFPRI launched – after a two-year preparation process – *A 2020 Vision for Food, Agriculture, and the Environment*. In this initiative, IFPRI developed a global vision of a world where, by the year 2020, every person has access to sufficient food to sustain a healthy and productive life, where malnutrition is absent and where food originates from efficient, effective, and low-cost food systems that are

compatible with sustainable use of natural resources. The Vision is based on the principle that everyone has a basic human right to access to adequate food and nutrition and the concept of general human dignity. The initiative builds on food policy research by IFPRI and others, and relies on data from many sources. In addition to conducting analyses and syntheses, the initiative has brought together policymakers, analysts, government officials, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. The purpose is to build a broad common understanding of the nature of the food, agriculture and environmental problems that will confront the world over the next two decades, and of the policies that should be adopted to deal with these problems.

To achieve its global vision, IFPRI works to generate and disseminate knowledge to support policies promoting broad-based income growth and poverty alleviation in rural areas of developing countries, the acceleration of growth and transformation of the

food and agricultural systems in the developing countries, and the increase access to food and improved nutrition among the rural and urban poor. IFPRI believes that the 2020 Vision can be achieved by the year 2020 if the world commits itself to changes in behaviour, priorities and policies. This will involve individuals, households, farmers, local communities, NGOs, national governments and the international community. Continuing with business as usual is certain to lead to persisting hunger and poverty and to continued degradation of the environment. These are catalysts for an increasingly unstable and polarized world.

THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT – A STEP FORWARD IN THE QUEST TO BRING FOOD FOR EVERYONE?

The World Food Summit in Rome (November 1996) put the need for worldwide food security back in the centre of the development debate and reaffirmed 'the right of every person to have access to safe and nutritious food,

IFPRI AT A GLANCE

IFPRI collaborates worldwide with governments and private and public institutions interested in increasing food production and improving the equity of its distribution. Research results are disseminated to policymakers, administrators, policy analysts, researchers, and others concerned with national and international food and agricultural policy. With respect to the IFPRI organizational structure there are, in addition to the Board of Trustees,

the Director General's office and the Administration, five main divisions: Environment and Production Technology, Food Consumption and Nutrition, Markets and Structural Studies, Trade and Macroeconomics, and Outreach.

IFPRI is one of the 16 members of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), which it joined in 1980. The CGIAR endorsed the 2020 Vision analyses as important contributions to food security efforts.

Headquarters:	Washington, D.C., USA
Founded:	1975
Board Chair:	Martin Piñeiro
Director General:	Per Pinstrup-Andersen
Expenditures:	\$ 15.6 million (1996)
Donors:	Individual countries, national and multilateral agencies, foundations
Total Staff:	127 members (51 senior, 76 support – as of Dec. 31, 1996)
Outposted Staff:	14 members in 11 developing countries



consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger'. The summit sponsored by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) emphasized the integrated model of sustainable development agreed upon at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. The summit adopted a Rome Declaration on World Food Security and a Plan of Action that sets a framework for future action to halve the number of hungry people in the world to about 400 million by the year 2015. This commitment is a step forward – though not a very bold one – in the direction of IFPRI's Vision.

In Rome, Mr. Wolfensohn of the World Bank outlined a new concept for developing the rural areas. According to him, the World Bank is looking at integrated solutions that combine political, economic and social development and which would support rural areas to stop the urban drift. This concentration of the World Bank on poverty alleviation in rural areas, based on an integrated approach, looks like a farewell to its traditional insensitive structural adjustment programmes and could be a hopeful sign.

However, the FAO Summit left some questions open. The Plan of Action is

not compulsory. It does not speak about additional funds to fight hunger and only makes a vague reference to the ODA target of 0.7 per cent of Gross National Product (GNP). Is trade really a key element in achieving world food security, as stated in the Plan? The NGOs represented at the summit claimed that market forces will not, by themselves, solve the problem of food insecurity. They proposed a new model for achieving food security based on decentralization, a stronger role of the family farmer and more regard for the environment.

In any case, IFPRI will continue to fulfill its mission and to work for its 2020 Vision, as it did in 1996: 2020 analyses led to the publication of twelve 2020 briefs and nine 2020 discussion papers; at least 22 country-level meetings and presentations were held; three workshops in Latin America brought together experts in food, agriculture and the environment to debate problems and challenges and develop regional strategies to achieve a 2020 Vision for Latin America; other activities focused on collaboration with individual developing countries,

“MEETING THE INCREASED AND CHANGING FOOD NEEDS RESULTING FROM POPULATION GROWTH, RISING INCOMES AND CHANGING LIFESTYLES, WILL BE A FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGE.”

particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, to assist with the design and implementation of their own 2020 strategies and action programmes through networks. Fundraising letters and proposals for the so-called second-phase activities were sent out; commitments from several donors were received. IFPRI applauds FAO's call for heads of state and international institutions to take the steps needed to revitalize failing agricultural systems in the most vulnerable countries. In the wake of the Food Summit, IFPRI is collaborating with FAO in follow-up efforts to transform the goals of the summit into realities.

Views vary on prospects for future



world food security. Based on the UN low-variant projection of a reduction in population growth rate, the global population in 2020 would be seven billion instead of the anticipated eight billion. This would significantly improve the food security situation. Some are complacent that future food needs will be met, others are cautiously optimistic, and there are some who

are pessimistic that the limits to food production are being reached, that natural resources are being degraded and that the international environment will not be favourable to the needs of developing countries as a whole.

As estimates of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization indicate, the total figure of 840 million undernourished people in developing countries





will come down to 680 million people by the year 2010, whereas the absolute number of chronically undernourished people living in Africa and the Middle East will increase.

To a certain extent, IFPRI backs these optimistic estimates. However, IFPRI research suggests that – without new and concerted action – food insecurity could persist in South Asia and, to a lesser extent, in Latin America and the Caribbean, while it will indeed accelerate substantially in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa.

MOST LIKELY PROSPECTS – THE POORER COUNTRIES REMAIN A CHALLENGE

Meeting the increased and changing food needs resulting from population growth, rising incomes and changing lifestyles, will be a fundamental challenge. These increases in demand, which vary considerably amongst developing country regions, are large. According to IFPRI research, the developing countries are projected to increase their demand for cereals by 58 per cent between 1993 and 2020, for meat by 118 per cent and for roots and tubers by 58 per cent. Per capita demand for cereals in developing countries as a group is projected to

increase by 6.5 per cent to 225 kilograms and for meat by 47 per cent to 31 kilograms. Developing countries are projected to demand only 65 per cent of the cereals and 63 per cent of the meat that developed countries are likely to demand by 2020, although developing countries will account for more than 80 per cent of the world's population.

To meet the growing food needs, world cereal production is projected – in the most likely scenario – to grow by 1.3 per cent per year between 1993 and 2020, meat production by 1.8 per cent and production of roots and tubers by 1.3 per cent. However, the economic demand for food in developing countries is expected to increase faster than the production of food. Thus, developing countries are projected to more than double their net cereal imports from 94 million metric tons in 1993 to 228 million in 2020. (Maize is expected to constitute 27 per cent of net cereal imports in 2020, compared to 19 per cent in 1993). During the same period, their net meat imports are projected to

increase almost 20-fold to 12 million metric tons.

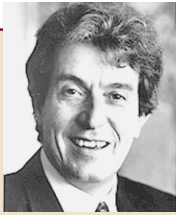
It is projected that the real prices of all major food commodities, except fish, will decrease. On average, world cereal prices are expected to decline by about 11 per cent between 1993 and 2020, meat prices by about 6 per cent and prices for roots and tubers by 4 per cent. These projected price decreases are much smaller than the decreases that occurred during the last 25 years.

The gap between production and need is likely to become wider as many of the poor are priced out of the market. The better-off countries, notably in Southeast Asia, will be able to fill the gap, but the poorer countries will lack sufficient foreign exchange to import the needed food. It is the latter group of countries, including most of those in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, that will remain a challenge and require special support to avert widespread hunger and malnutrition. For the 2020 Vision to be realized, enough food must be produced sustainably to meet the food needs of

PRIORITY AREAS TO REALIZE IFPRI'S 2020 VISION FOR FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

No magic solution will make the 2020 Vision a reality. Each country must design its own action programme. As a general guideline, research and consultations identified the need for sustained action in six priority areas to realize the 2020 Vision:

- 1. Strengthen the capacity of developing country governments to perform appropriate functions, such as maintaining law and order, enforcing property rights and promoting market economy.*
- 2. Enhance the productivity, health, and nutrition of low-income people, especially women, and increase their access to remunerative employment and productive assets.*
- 3. Strengthen agricultural research and extension systems in and for developing countries.*
- 4. Promote sustainable agricultural intensification and sound management of natural resources, with increased emphasis on areas with agricultural potential, fragile soils, limited rainfall and widespread poverty.*
- 5. Develop efficient, effective and low-cost agricultural input and output markets.*
- 6. Expand international cooperation and assistance and improve its efficiency and effectiveness.*

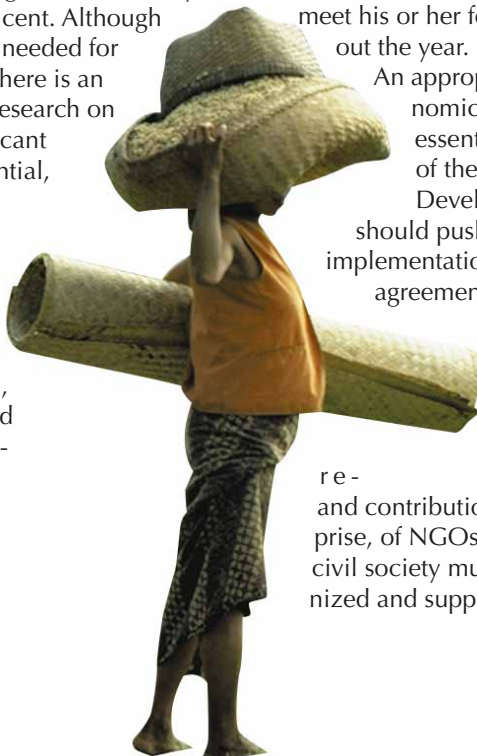


Prof. Dr. Uwe Holtz, born in 1944, joined the IFPRI Board of Trustees in 1994. He is lecturer of Political Science at the University of Bonn (Germany) and development correspondent of the European Commission's Directorate General VIII (Development), Brussels. He was a member of the German Parliament where he chaired the Committee for Economic Cooperation and Development from 1974 to 1994 and of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France.

every person in the world. Sustainable improvements in food security and nutrition are overall indicators of success in attaining the 2020 Vision. Sustained (policy) action is required in six priority areas to realize the Vision (see page 53).

Even if the number of malnourished people living in a food-insecure situation diminishes, these people will need better access to food. The gap between production and market demand for cereals, which is forecast to widen, must be closed.

IFPRI advocates the strengthening of agricultural research and extension in and for developing countries. Low-income countries should invest (in agricultural research) at least one per cent of the value of total agricultural output with a longer-term (5 – 10 year) target of two per cent. Although more research is needed for all eco-regions, there is an urgent need for research on areas with significant agricultural potential, low or irregular rainfall, fragile soils, large populations of poor people, and high risks of land degradation, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity. Additional



research is necessary to develop crops tolerant to drought and resistant to pests and disease, biological pest management, nitrogen fixation, more effective use of locally available organic materials, intercropping systems and perennial crops, including agroforestry. National agricultural research must be supported by a vibrant international agricultural research system that undertakes strategic research of a public-goods nature with large international benefits. Partnerships need to be enhanced among national agricultural research institutions in developing countries, international agricultural research centres and institutions and relevant public- and private-sector institutions and companies in OECD countries in order to expand research of critical importance for developing countries, including research in biotechnology.

EACH COUNTRY MUST DESIGN ITS OWN ACTION PROGRAMME

The strategy proposed by IFPRI's Vision is focused mostly on developing countries and their governments; however, industrialized countries have a responsibility to pursue policies that facilitate, rather than impede, the realization of the 2020 Vision. National governments are – with external assistance – responsible for creating an economic, political and social environment in which every person is able to meet his or her food needs throughout the year.

An appropriate macroeconomic environment is essential to the realization of the 2020 Vision.

Developing countries should push for full and timely implementation of the last GATT agreement, and press for further reform of global trade in the age of globalization. For the 2020

Vision to be realized, the efforts and contributions of private enterprise, of NGOs and other parts of civil society must be fully recognized and supported; a more

effective coordination and division of labour must be achieved. The industrial world should increase the financial means for development cooperation and strengthen the efforts to make it more efficient and effective; governments should transfer public funds to NGOs and local communities for programmes best handled by them and look for a better cooperation with the private sector.

Will global poverty, widespread hunger, overpopulation and environmental degradation lead to the collapse of our globe? IFPRI is convinced that the future should be faced with confidence. The world's natural resources are capable of supporting sustainable food security for every single person. But so far the present pool of knowledge has not been transferred in appropriate ways – it is still too limited and it is not increasing fast enough. And there is still a lack of political will to implement the many plans of action adopted in international conferences. More support should, therefore, be given to a know-how and technology transfer which narrows the widening scientific gulf between many developing countries and the industrial world, to more research, to an enlargement of the bridge between research and practical application and to those people who are willing to transfer all the good intentions into reality.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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- A list with references concerning this article can be obtained from the editors upon request.