

RAFI *Translator*

An Unauthorized Translation of Intergovernmental Documents

Security or Dependency?

Draft World Food Summit Declaration and Plan of Action Entrenches Food Insecurity - but the Debate is Far from Over

- Text:** Towards Universal Food Security - Draft of a Policy Statement and Plan of Action (World Food Summit, Document: WFS 96/3 , Provisional Version Rev. 1))
- Forum:** This text will be negotiated by an intergovernmental working group during July and August prior to a major negotiating session at the FAO Committee on Food Security (25-27 September). The revised text will then be adopted by Heads of State at the World Food Summit (13-17 November, Rome).
- Summary:** The draft warns that 800 million people are underfed and as much as a third of the people in 20 countries will be severely malnourished by the year 2010 unless urgent action is taken. The paper proposes to increase food availability to at least 2700 calories pc/pd by 2010. The means to this end is closely connected to agricultural trade liberalization through the World Trade Organization. There are 7 commitments, 20 objectives and 100 specific actions proposed. The Plan of Action is to be implemented in 1997 with key national and regional functions at work by 2000 and a full review in 2005. The Plan ends in 2010 but makes some projections to 2030.
- Analysis:** In the unlikely event that this text is adopted, it would surrender the world's hungry to the mercies of the WTO. FAO's member governments would formally abandon food self-sufficiency for "self-reliance" - a euphemism for "market dependency". OECD states are actually calling upon the South to trust the market and to experiment with the untested theory that open-market mechanisms and transnational agribusinesses will feed the hungry. (This is akin to the age-old offer of the chicken to make bacon-and-eggs with the pig.) Once countries restructure away from food production in favour of export crops or manufacturing, the road back to national self-sufficiency - in the event the market proves equity-challenged - could be washed away forever. Escalating grain prices, de-escalating food aid support, and a modicum of common sense should force major revisions to the text between now and late September, however. Other elements in the text related to crop genetic diversity, the link between peace and food security, the role of women (still ineptly enunciated), the Pesticide Code, etc. have promise.

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RAFI *Translator* is a document interpretation service offered to Civil Society Organizations and Governments help UN conference participant understand the actual intent and implications of UN papers. Where necessary, RAFI provides alternative text intended to better meet the true purpose of the document. The left-hand column contains the UN document while the right-hand column provides the RAFI translation or text-change recommendation. If the original text is abridged, this is clearly indicated so that readers need not be in doubt.

RAFI (Rural Advancement Foundation International) is a non-profit Civil Society Organization headquartered in Ottawa, Canada. RAFI's mandate is to explore the socio-economic impact of new technologies as they affect rural societies. RAFI, in particular, addresses issues related to agricultural biodiversity and biotechnology with special regard for the intellectual property and benefit-sharing implications of these issues. RAFI can be reached at Suite 504, 71 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA K1P 5N2 Telephone: (613) 567-6880 Telefax: (613) 567-6884 E-mail: rafican@web.apc.org.

Translator's Notes

1. The Measurable Statements

Where Figures (Percent/Dollar) Provide Measurement

The Summit is short on hard figures and percentages that permit effective measurement later on. It is especially interesting, then, to see where figures are used - and where they are not. In summary, the Plan of Action is most precise when it deals with investment targets and proposals requiring external inputs such as irrigation and plant and animal nutrients.

Although the text talks a lot about participation, civil society, and the role of women, it sets no measurable targets. The text also avoids any specific commitments to training, employment, farm and family incomes, or household food costs. It does, however, pledge itself to provide 2700 calories per person per day by 2010. The following are the only statistical references in the text...

Concerns: 800 million hungry people.

Population: 30% in 20 States will be chronically malnourished.

Goals: Nutrition: 2700 calories per person per day.

Production: Increase global production by 2% and South by 3%.

Irrigation: Improve water use efficiency by 20% and bring 40 million new hectares under

irrigation and reclaim 10 million hectares of irrigation-damaged land.

Livestock: Improve grazing and increase feed efficiency for 50% of livestock.

Seeds: Double use by small farmers (to 20%).

Germplasm: Plant: \$200 million plus

Animals: \$200 million plus

Investment: Increase annual agricultural investment by 30% to \$185 billion.

Production: \$105 billion

Processing: \$43 billion

Public Services: \$37 billion

Financing: ODF for agriculture dropped 7% from \$13.4 billion in 1988 to \$10 billion in 1993. Increase fund availability to \$15 billion on a 60/40 (Multi/bilateral) ratio.

Missing Goals:

The following are a few examples of measurable targets the text should be able to establish with at least the same accuracy as the economic targets noted above.

Participation: Women's policy participation, research, training, etc..

Farmers' policy, research, training participation.

Environment: Germplasm conservation goals;

Soil erosion protection/desertification.

Pesticide reduction goals;

Artificial fertilizer reduction goals;

Access to traditional seeds and breeds.

Food diversification.

Economic: Small farm incomes

Household food costs

Women's incomes.

Small farm credit access.

Social: Land reform.

Farm size;

Rural migration.

Self-sufficiency.

2. The Timetable

When Will It Be Done?

The draft text does offer some very useful target dates by which actions will be taken or programmes put in place. Most of the deadlines crop up in the year 2000 but the date for review is set at 2005. This is like holding an autopsy rather than proposing therapy.

The review date should be 2000 and the review process should include a second Summit. Since so many of the actions proposed (see below) involve investment and trade considerations, it would be especially appropriate to change the date to 2000 to coincide with the WTO's review of agriculture and TRIPS (both noted in the text). This would allow food security concerns to take their rightful place in evaluating the impact of the Uruguay Round. Here are the deadlines as currently proposed...

- 1997** Begin improving intergovernmental coordination/efficiency.
 Review financial requirements of the Action Plan.
 Reestablish process for national goal-setting.
 Establish goal-monitoring timetable.

2000 Preparedness mechanisms in all Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries (LIFDCs).

Determine national land and water resource potential in order to concentrate in these areas.

LIFDCs should have programmes designed and action underway.

Control desert locust

Regionally-coordinated LIFDC IPM programmes.

Improve intergovernmental coordination/efficiency.

2005 Major global and regional progress review.

2010 Summit goals to be achieved.

3. The Language Index

A Rough and Ready Overview of the Texts Language (and Orientation?)

It may seem a strange way to analyze an intergovernmental document, but the old-fashioned counting of words can tell us a lot about who the authors think the text is for and where they are placing their emphasis. Often, the words that are missing can tell us as much about the essential meaning of the text than what is written.

In the draft text, forty of the 127 specific action statements (the "Commitments", "Objectives", and "Actions" collectively) speak to corporate terms and interests. In the whole text, it is interesting to note that "rights" appears as often in support of market interests as it does with reference to the right to food. Although there are 56 references to "production", there are only three to "distribution". The only code word more commonly used than production, in fact, is "sustainable" - a licentious term that is sometimes employed to imply sustainable profits as much as sustainable ecosystems. There are many more

references to the private sector than to the public sector.

The missing corporate buzz word, however, is "biotechnology". Despite a heavy emphasis on agricultural research, the drafters seem to either feel the topic is too laden with social implications or that it is a self-evident solution. Other missing terms include any reference to hunters, gatherers, pastoralists, or nay of the tough political language that could turn a "commitment" into a "promise".

Word(s)	Occurrences (entire text)
The Compassion Index:	
Poor/Poverty	13
Hunger/Hungry	11
(Mal/Under)nourish(ed/ment)	8
Famine(s)	2
Food shortage(s)	1
Starv(ing/ation)	0
The Corporate Index:	
Invest(or/ment)	40
Trad(e/ing)	25
Private	22
Market(place)	20
Right (user/property)**	4
Profit	2
Contract	1
The Economic Index:	
Production	56
Consum(ption/er)	18
Distribution	3
The Sectoral Index:	
Nutrition	29
Fish/Marine/Aquaculture	17
Forest/Tree/Silviculture	16
Crop/Farm	14
Livestock/Animal	11
The Agenda 21 Index:	
Sustain(able/ability)	58
Environment(al)	29
Divers(ity/ification)	13
Biodiversity	3

The Participatory Index:

Woman/Women	20
Farmer(s)	15
Participat(ion/ory)	15
Producer(s)**	14
NGO/Nongovernmental*	13
Indigenous /Traditional	3

The "Technical" Index:

Irrigation/Water	17
Research	17
Nutrient/Soil	10
Pest/icide(s)	9
Seed/Yield	4
Biotechnology	0

The Institutional Index:

Private sector	11
Government(s)	31
FAO	6
WTO	3
Public sector	2

The Rights Index:

(In)equitable	7
Peace/Conflict	7
Right(s) (Users/Property)**	4
Right(s) (to food)	4
Land tenure	1

Some Missing Index:

Hunter	
Gatherer	
Pastoral(ist/ism)	
Shif(ting/ed) cultivator	
Justice	
Vow	
Promise	

* In FAO-speak, producers and NGOs can be (and often are) private sector companies.

**This term appears in more than one place in this table.

And now for a detailed review of the 127 action statements ...