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PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AND KENYA'S NATIONAL FOOD POLICY PAPER†

Development Plans are useless unless they are followed with concrete action to make them a reality. I therefore wish to stress once again, that each one of us must play his or her role to ensure that we achieve the objectives of our national food policy.

President Daniel arap Moi
October 14, 1982

In 1981 the government of Kenya issued a National Food Policy Paper in response to increasing production and marketing problems. The Paper set forth an officially approved strategy to maintain self-sufficiency in the main foodstuffs so that the nation can be fed without using scarce foreign exchange on food imports, achieve a calculated degree of security of food supply for each area of the country, and ensure that the distribution of foodstuffs will provide every member of the population with a nutritionally adequate diet (Kenya, 1981, p. 2).

There is nothing unusual about the process by which the Paper was formulated. It is a product of Kenyan planning officers directed to produce a public document addressing an existing food crisis, government economists charged with preparing a paper that analyzes the problem and outlines a strategy for addressing it, and senior civil servants exercising political caution. What merits attention are the national seminar and provincial workshops sponsored by the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock Development. These meetings were intended to publicize widely the Paper's contents in an effort to demonstrate that the Ministries were acting responsibly to ensure adequate food supplies, stimulate central and field-level bureaucrats and technicians to translate the

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Paper's recommendations into action, and gain support in the government for the necessary price policy changes and research and extension investments.

The meetings deserve analysis because of the current food crises in Africa, the international development community's call for the formulation and effective implementation of realistic food policy strategies for the continent (World Bank, 1981), and calls by experts for increasing the capacity of technical field personnel and rural people to alter the urban or large-farm biases in agricultural production policies, programs, and projects (Lofchie and Commins, 1982, p. 24). In this regard, the Kenyan case provides solid empirical evidence that appropriately managed, broadened participation can improve formulation and implementation of food policies in Africa.

In support of this conclusion, this article attempts to demonstrate that increased participation by technical government officers would have generated information and insights that could have improved the content and utility of those sections of the Paper related to programs and projects required to implement the proposed policy; the public discussion that did occur ensured that the Paper's contents were better understood by technical personnel and would have increased their support for the policy's objectives and interventions had the government decided to use the Paper as the basis of a committed campaign; and the participatory process that took place after the Paper was published facilitated the sponsoring ministries' programmatic objectives. It will be asserted that while participation by government officers, field technicians, and rural people is most likely to be useful to those sections of a food policy paper that articulate programs and projects, increased participation can also serve to promote responsiveness to political realities and sensitivity to constraints and opportunities. Finally, the article will conclude by offering some general guidelines for increasing participation in such policy-making exercises.

PLANNING AND PARTICIPATION

Comprehensive national development plans and supporting sectoral policy papers have been prepared for less-developed countries by economists since the 1950s. Despite the use of increasingly sophisticated techniques, however, these documents have generally failed to provide realistic guidelines for promoting more rational and rapid development. A number of reasons for this have been outlined in the critical literature.¹ Among the most important of these to the

¹ For a review of the criticism of plans and policy formulation see Rondinelli (1983, pp. 28-42). Among the more serious of these are lack of strong political and administrative support, tendency to allow political decisions to overrule technical recommendations, lack of data, failure to link plans to realistic action programs or resource allocation possibilities, ineffectiveness of macro planning methods and techniques, and weaknesses in government administrative structures charged with execution and evaluation. See also Waterston (1965) and Mead (1977).

case of food policy formulation is the charge that typically those framing policies come from sectoral planning units and tend to disregard the need to involve central ministry technicians ultimately responsible for implementing policy recommendations and hold inflated estimates of their own knowledge about divergent local-level constraints and opportunities (Coulsen, 1977). Hence, it is not surprising that among the principal reasons identified for failed plans and policies is the fact that economists are often ill-informed about the realities of politics, insensitive to financial constraints, overly optimistic about administrative capacity, and unaware of the complexity of conditions and changes at the local level.² These reasons are particularly salient in the African context because foreign experts serving in governments on a short-term basis often play a major role in formulating agricultural policy documents.

The failure of sectoral planners and economists to involve technical officers of development ministries and agencies in policy formulation can be cured by senior civil servants aware of the need to broaden the policy analysis process. That this can be done is evidenced by experience in India, Pakistan, and Thailand (UNECAFE, 1969; Changrien, 1970). It requires, however, a commitment to use the emerging policy to guide implementation. Far more difficult a challenge is to get such leadership and its technical experts to acknowledge the need for local input.

Based on long experience in African policy formulation, Bruce F. Johnston and William C. Clark (1982, p. 229) argue a need to develop

techniques for tapping local knowledge and for learning from the experience of actually implementing programs . . . and to devise more effective means of combining the two approaches of intellectual cogitation and social interaction.

Toward these ends, they advocate increased farm-level investigations and more assessment surveys. However, more than this is needed. As long as governments limit the private sector's capacity to cope with variation and insist on public institutions regulating agricultural production and marketing at or below the district level, it is essential for food policy planners to have specific knowledge of local conditions. This is because successful implementation of state interventionist food policies depends on accurate data on and understanding of many divergent production, marketing, processing, and consumption patterns, as well as appreciation of constraints and opportunities faced by government agencies and private firms charged with promoting food policy guidelines. Indeed, a recent commentary by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

² For example, Bruce F. Johnston and William C. Clark argue that "National planning typically fails to take account of realities at the local level. Planners, because of their backgrounds and interests, too often are inclined to spend most of their time in the capital city, remaining ignorant of the rural sector in general and of semisubsistence farming in particular Too little time and effort have been devoted to adapting national targets and budget allocations in the light of the actual conditions and changes taking place at the local level" (1982, pp. 228-29).

on the need to improve the food policy process in Africa argues that ways need to be found of "getting agricultural producers to help formulate policy" (Mellor and Delgado, 1983, pp. 1, 4). While Johnston, Clark, and IFPRI do not consider the wider participation of government officials and field agents or offer examples supporting the utility of this exercise or methodologies as to how this might be done, they are clearly on the right track.

A growing literature argues that government interventions aimed at rural development objectives are more likely to succeed if provincial political interests, implementing field officers, and the rural population are involved in their design, implementation, and evaluation.

Since the early 1970s, much has been learned about the concept of "induced participation" and the utility of incorporating participation strategies into development efforts.³ While an increasing number of governments and donors are promoting the use of decentralization, local institutional development, and popular involvement strategies, such efforts are confined largely to specific programs and projects. Importantly, many economists in central planning agencies are not aware of the potential utility of participation to the policy-making process. Others, whether aware of it or not, believe that it is impossible to craft macro policy when large numbers of nonprofessionals are involved.

The principal exception to this fact has been where central planners have requested local plans for use in the formal preparation of a national five-year plan. Typically, this approach has led to the preparation of long shopping lists of projects by field agents, the inability of central planners to handle the resulting volume of lengthy and inconsistent input, the failure of published plans to reflect local requests, and mutual disillusionment with the attempted strategy (Chambers, 1974, p. 141; Howell, 1977). While this has happened in Kenya (Found, 1980, p. 85), it need not be the case if the participatory input is well organized and focused (Delp, 1980, p. 13).

Proponents of participatory planning argue that they have much to offer planners and economists seeking to formulate development policies and to governments committed to implementing them. Among the specific benefits touted are: access to accurate information; identification of local problems and needs the center overlooks or is ill-informed about; recognition of divergent provincial, district, and local patterns; broad-based critique of emerging policy assumptions and guidelines; promotion of humane recommendations; generation of support for policies by those who contributed to their formulation; promotion of better coordination among involved ministries; and stimulation of latent creative energy of rural people and provincial government field officers. Rarely are these advantages sought, in part because their validity is not well demonstrated.

³ Accumulated evidence is presented in the state-of-the-art paper by Uphoff, Cohen, and Goldsmith (1979); see also Gow and Van Sant (1981).

FORMULATION OF KENYA'S 1981 FOOD POLICY

In 1980 the government of Kenya had to import large quantities of maize, wheat, and milk powder. The shortages of that year ended essentially two decades of self-sufficiency in food production and dealt a severe blow to national confidence.⁴ Unable to bear the political costs of long lines of Kenyans queued up for rationed food,⁵ the high costs of food imports,⁶ or the scandal associated with the export of maize when national shortfalls were projected,⁷ the government of President Moi advanced an ongoing food policy analysis being undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture into a National Food Policy Paper.

Since independence, the government has been engaged in development planning. By 1980, the country had been through three five-year plans. In the middle of a fourth plan, which emphasized agriculture and small farm production, government economists suddenly found that gross domestic product and agricultural production were growing far below projected rates.⁸ They did not have to look far to explain this inadequate performance. Rapidly increasing energy costs, world-wide recession, declining terms of trade, and bad weather certainly were widely recognized by the public. Yet those who drafted the emerging food policy plan went much further.

While pointing out that the past two decades had seen an average annual growth in agricultural production of 3.5 percent, an opening paragraph of the Paper starkly notes (Kenya, 1981, pp. 1-2):

The rapid expansion of the population and a shortage of unexploited arable land in the main high potential areas are beginning to expose a potentially dangerous imbalance in the relationship between the national supply of and demand for food. The nation no longer enjoys

⁴ Some maize was imported during the periods 1965/66 and 1970/71, and there has always been illicit trade across the Tanzanian and Ugandan borders, but Kenya has been largely self-sufficient. For background on Kenya's agricultural sector, see Heyer et al. (1976).

⁵ In 1978/80 shortfalls in maize production led to ration conditions. For example, "hundreds of Nairobi residents queued for maize meal at Uchumi Supermarket . . . The residents included women, children, and men who started queuing at 8 am Similar queues have been seen outside various shopping centers in the city where maize meal has become a rare commodity" (*Daily Nation*, July 1, 1980, p. 2). Milk, bread, and rice were also in short supply at this time and stores with those commodities quickly sold out without satisfying long lines of buyers.

⁶ It was estimated that between 1981 and 1983 imports of maize would cost Ksh 2,500 million, or five times the cereal import bill in 1980. For the entire decade, the food imports were expected to reach Ksh 15,000 million (*Weekly Review*, May 15, 1981, p. 26).

⁷ For details on this scandal see *Daily Nation* (March 15, 1980, p. 1) and *The Standard* (March 20, 1980, p. 2; June 17, 1980, p. 4; and July 2, 1980, p. 4).

⁸ For reviews of recent Plan performance, see Curry (1982) and Kenya (1980, 1982).

the advantage of regular surpluses of foodstuffs to cushion the impact of a fall in production in years of crop failure. Whereas present levels of domestic food production would have been broadly sufficient to satisfy demand in the mid-1970s, Kenya today faces shortages of maize, wheat, rice and milk.

The causes of this problem run far deeper than those of an estimated 4 percent annual population growth rate pressing on an arable land supply of less than 18 percent of the country's total area. They are found in poor government strategy, inappropriate public policies, and poorly administered programs and projects—problems widely discussed in the Kenyan press.⁹

Asserting that the shortages of 1980 and 1981 were not isolated events but the beginning of an endemic problem, the Paper carefully points out how difficult it will be to obtain the 4.9 percent annual growth rate needed to return to conditions of self-sufficiency in maize, much less other food crops. It then articulates a sweeping but vague set of policies and programs for obtaining national self-sufficiency in food production. Cautiously optimistic in tone and bureaucratic in style, the Paper is long on generalized analysis and short on details for developing, financing, and implementing its numerous recommendations.

Process of Formulation

The National Food Policy Paper is the product of the Development Planning Division (DPD) of the Ministry of Agriculture, a unit built up in the 1970s as part of the government's effort to create sectoral analysis capacity in development ministries.¹⁰ The food policy draft grew out of earlier efforts by the DPD to respond to papers prepared by FAO and Rockefeller consultants on the topic "Toward the Year 2000" (FAO, 1981; McCarthy and Mwangi, 1982). Since there was no perceived food crisis at this time, work had begun on this at the request of the Director of Agriculture, who wanted to have a paper focused on the immediate decade of the 1980s. An ad hoc committee was formed and given a vague mandate to review food requirements and production potential. While the committee had no clear terms of reference, initially it did not seek to produce an action-oriented food policy paper.

In early 1980 the committee prepared a collection of papers that reflected primarily the personal technical interests of its members. Then the politics of the maize shortage crisis intervened. As a result, the committee's assignment

⁹ For example, Joseph Karimi's and Calestous Juma's articles in *Daily Nation* (May 11, 1981, p. 25; May 24, 1981, pp. 16-17).

¹⁰ The DPD had two separate contingents of multilaterally funded advisers: the Technical Assistance Pool, administered by the Harvard Institute for International Development and focused on strategy formulation, commodity analysis, and project design; and the Food and Agricultural Organization's Marketing Development Project, which concentrated on agricultural marketing issues. Three economists from the two groups played a major role in drafting the resulting Food Policy Paper.

rapidly expanded into an exercise aimed at producing a national food policy paper. At this time, senior Kenyan officers made the central decision on which the Paper was premised: that Kenya could and should aim to achieve self-sufficiency in basic food supplies. Hence, the most critical assumption was made early on, without analysis or consideration of alternative approaches. Shortly thereafter, an in-house first draft was produced. Although major changes were to occur in the Paper over the coming months, it provided the basic position ultimately taken by the government.

While overseen by an intraministerial committee of Kenyan officers and given general guidance by an ad hoc committee of central planners,¹¹ DPD economists were largely responsible for the analysis and writing of each succeeding draft. Throughout this process there was little of the "planner decision maker dialogue" the planning literature idealizes (Roemer, 1976; Killick, 1976). Rather, draftsmen prepared the paper with no substantive directions or advice from the operations divisions at ministerial headquarters, field-level technicians, or other planners or economists elsewhere in the government.

Only on final review by senior political officers in the government were major questions asked about the draft. These centered on criticism that the Paper lacked an explicit plan of action. Since there was a growing public clamor for the Paper, a hurried last-minute redraft was done. Specifically, a new section appeared that called for the creation of five food policy committees¹² responsible for formulating, developing, and coordinating policies and programs and that outlined some dozen general programs for increasing production and consumption.¹³ The unwritten rationale for the committees was that even with the newly added section the Paper glossed too many issues and failed to articulate the kinds of detailed policy and program statements needed to fulfill its general strategy recommendations.

Finally, in May 1981, the Ministry of Agriculture published the National Food Policy Paper as Sessional Paper No. 4, and the Minister tabled debate in

¹¹ Drafting was done under the chairmanship of the head of the DPD's Commodity Analysis Section. The drafting team was made up of five expatriate advisers and three Kenyans. Members of the ad hoc drafting committee were from the staffs of technical units in the Ministries of Livestock Development and Economic Planning (MEPAD) and the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB). In practice, the MEPAD and NCPB made no substantive contribution to the drafting process.

¹² These committees were Increasing Food Production; Agricultural Inputs; Processing and Marketing; Nutrition; and Mid- and Long-Term Policy Issues. The specific focus of each was briefly outlined in Kenya (1981, pp. 25-26).

¹³ Specifically, programs were recommended to improve the supply of seeds; land preparation services; supply and utilization of fertilizer and other agricultural inputs; credit facilities for food production; extension services; research on food production; livestock and fish production; food processing facilities; marketing and distribution of food; agricultural information; weather monitoring and warning systems; national food security; and nutrition (Kenya, 1981, pp. 27-44).

Parliament until after the mid-year recess. The 52-page paper attracted the full attention of the widely read Kenyan press, with one major magazine publishing the paper in full (*Weekly Review*, May 15, 1981, pp. 26-35).

Communication to Officials and Public

Shortly after the release of the food policy paper in early May, one of Kenya's most perceptive political commentators expressly noted the top-down, planning-expert-guided origins of the Paper. In a strongly worded editorial, Hilary Ng'weno called for wider participation in the discussion of the Paper's overall strategy (*Weekly Review*, June 5, 1981, p. 1):

The paper is due to be debated in Parliament and it is our hope that out of that debate, as well as debate outside parliament, a workable system for ensuring self-sufficiency in food will be created. We emphasize the word debate here because it is important that those responsible for drawing up the sessional paper reassess their major policy stances in light of the views of other, and probably equally competent experts who may not have had any input into the production of the sessional paper. It is only after such reassessment has been done that the policies outlined in the sessional paper should be implemented. The reassessment will be meaningful if it is the product of the give and take of debate and the debate will be worthwhile only if those who engage in it present their views from informed positions . . . (the debate) most certainly deserves more than the usual rambling and parochial contribution many MPs make in Parliament when discussing issues of national importance. We likewise plead to other Kenyans who have something to contribute to the debate on a national food policy to make their views known. The time to offer advice is now, not after things have gone wrong.

Parliamentary debate did not occur until November of 1981, and although some constructive criticisms were offered,¹⁴ the Paper emerged from the process unchanged.

Once Parliamentary approval was accomplished, the Permanent Secretaries of the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock Development, with the approval of the Office of the President, moved to broaden discussion of the Paper so that the government and the private sector could begin to develop specific programs and projects for promoting food production. Toward these ends, they formulated an approach for stimulating two kinds of public discussion: a high-level national seminar on policy issues and a series of provincial workshops on implementation issues.

The objective of the seminar was to promote wide-ranging discussion of Kenya's Food Policy Paper by senior officers in the government. Specifically, the seminar sought to promote interministerial discussion of issues raised and

¹⁴ See, for example, *Daily Nation* (November 20, 1981, p. 5).

tasks posed by the Paper; generate interministerial recommendations for the Task Forces; advance interministerial understanding of and cooperation for the implementation of the Paper; and develop a government position on implementation that would provide the basis for detailed discussions with international donors on the financing of food policy programs and projects.

The three-day seminar was held July 13-15, 1981, at Nairobi's Kenya Institute of Administration. On the first day, papers were presented by outside consultants and then discussed by seminar participants. The second day saw the division of participants into five working groups: (1) strategies for overcoming constraints to increased food production; (2) agricultural and livestock inputs; (3) food processing and marketing; (4) nutrition; and (5) long-term policy objectives. Finally, on the third day the working groups presented their findings to the seminar and through discussion a set of general recommendations emerged.

More than 125 people participated in the seminar. Included were high-level officials of the Office of the President and the Ministries of Agriculture, Livestock Development, Finance, Economic Planning and Development, Health, Cooperative Development, Environment and Natural Resources, Water Development, Basic Education, Industry, Energy, Transport and Communication, Commerce, Higher Education, Information and Broadcasting, and Foreign Affairs. The Seminar also included Members of Parliament, representatives of food-related parastatals and boards, and observers from multilateral donor agencies.

The Seminar's participants produced an extensive set of recommendations for consideration by the five task forces to be created under the Food Policy Paper. In addition, a set of priorities and an action agenda also emerged from that meeting. A summary report of the seminar papers and action agenda was prepared in the Ministry of Agriculture. It was widely distributed in the government and to all seminar participants, all members of Parliament, and more than a thousand field officers of development-oriented ministries at the provincial food policy workshops.

Stimulated by the perceived success of the seminar, the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock Development formed an internal ad hoc committee to organize a series of provincial workshops focused on effective and efficient implementation of the new Paper. The objectives of the workshops were: (1) to brief frontline field officers on the Paper; (2) to identify constraints preventing effective and efficient food production programs; (3) to ensure better cooperation among ministries and organizations charged with implementing food production programs; (4) to communicate to the headquarters staff problems and constraints that hamper implementation; (5) to identify ways to decentralize decisions so that field officers could more effectively implement programs; (6) to identify new projects that could increase food production in the provinces; and (7) to discuss ways to increase activities despite budget cuts by the Treasury. The overall goal was for the workshops to end with the development of a plan of action for increasing food production.

The first day focused on a summary of the National Food Policy Paper,

a discussion of the implications of the Paper for the province's strategy for increasing food production, and a consideration of constraints and opportunities affecting the adequate supply of agricultural inputs, the improvement of provincial processing and marketing infrastructure, and the promotion of better nutrition and health of the province's population. On the second day, the workshops concentrated on an analysis of constraints affecting programs and projects aimed at increasing food production, giving particular attention to ideas for improving existing activities, developing new activities, and improving the coordination of activities within or between ministries.

As background preparation for the workshops, the Provincial Directors of Agriculture and Livestock Development in each province completed questionnaires outlining their major food production programs and projects, their major implementation activities, and their ideas for improved program implementation. Data from this survey were woven together with general data on the province's agriculture and livestock sectors to produce a background paper to stimulate discussion on each province.

In general, the logistics went smoothly, and senior officers from Agricultural and Livestock Development's headquarters staff, as well as planning officers and expatriate advisers involved in drafting the Food Policy Paper, participated with more than a thousand field staff in seven provincial workshops. The field staff was drawn from all of the related development ministries. An eighth workshop was held in Nairobi and focused on marketing issues, with private sector representatives in attendance.

Most workshops were well organized and run and marked by spirited discussions. They opened with a speech by a Minister or other high-ranking official from Nairobi, who touched on some of the factors behind the recent food shortages that led to a call for a national food policy. The official then summarized Sessional Paper No. 4 and warned participants not to attempt to formulate policy, for the Paper already did this, and told them to concentrate on identifying constraints and action-oriented proposals for overcoming them. The workshops then divided into six subgroups: agricultural research and extension, land use, livestock production, credit, and marketing. Reports on the proceedings of each syndicate were delivered to the entire workshop at the last session. Most workshops ended with a final speech by the Provincial Commissioner exhorting participants to work hard to carry out the recommendations of the Food Policy Paper. Shortly thereafter, each workshop secretariat produced an "action report," which was distributed to all those attending.

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES OF TECHNICAL PLANNERS, SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS, AND FIELD AGENTS

Four interesting questions about participatory policy planning processes can be addressed through a comparative analysis of the National Food Policy Paper, the proceedings of the national seminar on food policy, and seven

provincial workshops:¹⁵ (1) Would the policy formulation process have been better managed if participation in it had been broadened; (2) Did the seminar and workshop produce information and insights that might have improved the Paper; and (3) Would the probability of the Paper's outlining an implementable set of action recommendations have been increased had the process been more participatory from the outset?

A detailed comparative analysis will not be summarized here.¹⁶ Rather, six examples of major differences between the three participating levels will be highlighted, illustrating in the process some of the significant disadvantages of top-down policy formulation and the potential utility of more participatory approaches.

Ensuring an Effective, Timely Policy-Making Process

As noted earlier, the Food Policy Paper was conceived as a mid-term, problem-oriented exercise rather than an action statement until the closing days of the policy formation process, when critics elsewhere in the government faulted the draft for its lack of details on how to formulate, implement, and finance interventions aimed at promoting its major objectives. This is the case despite the fact that throughout the early 1980s the President, ministers, and senior political officers were openly calling for an end to research and analysis and a rapid acceleration of development activities. It is submitted that a more participatory, iterative process, such as that outlined in this article, would have ensured that draftsmen were more knowledgeable about the expectations of major political actors and more responsive to their objectives.

The preparation of the Food Policy Paper took far more time than was needed, largely because there was little pressure on those drafting it. Experience elsewhere suggests that participation generates demand for action by those who contributed positive suggestions. Hence, it is submitted that had there been broader participation in the policy formulation process, there would have been greater pressure on Kenyan officials to manage the process more effectively and deliver the Paper at the earliest possible date.

¹⁵ The Paper was largely written by two DPD advisers whose native language is English. Its meanings are unambiguous, though general. The proceedings of the national seminar were summarized by a native English speaker and foreign adviser who attended all sessions. They also contain summaries of four papers delivered by academics (two of whom are Kenyan), which enhance the information on and analysis of food production constraints. While they illustrate the utility of broadening debate, they were not used in the analysis.

Detailed proceedings were prepared at the end of each workshop by Kenyan members of the DPD and appointed provincial or district officers. It should be noted that the documents that emerged from the provincial workshops were summarized and edited by rapporteurs who exerted varying degrees of influence over the results.

¹⁶ A 44-page report was produced, which divided the analysis into nine major categories. This report was summarized in Cohen (1983, pp. 24-44).

Evidence in support of this is drawn from the actions of those who attended the seminar and workshops. As a group, they insisted that a few of their colleagues serve as recording secretaries and produce by the final session a document summarizing the proceedings and outlining the meeting's recommendations. Nearly every provincial workshop produced its lengthy, typed proceedings within days of the final session; group pressure was intense to produce on time.

And one could argue that increased participation might have lengthened the process; raising points and creating issues could complicate debate and prolong the drafting process. Still, given the experience of the Paper's drafting process and the enthusiasm, commitment, and product-oriented character of most provincial workshops, this hypothesis on the utility of participation to policy formulation exercises merits further exploration and testing.

Adding Detailed Knowledge

Economists who engage in planning and policy making for large sectors often lack the field-specific knowledge needed to accurately describe major development constraints and opportunities and fully outline programs for addressing them. Moreover, governments are rarely organized to provide channels allowing them to get insights, facts, and suggestions from those charged with implementing government food policy interventions or financing their operation. Both patterns characterize the Kenyan case. In this regard, broadened participation within a ministry can constrain the tendency of policy analysts to gloss topics on which they are poorly informed. It can also increase their knowledge about such topics, enhancing their ability to forge better policy recommendations. These advantages are illustrated by the Paper's treatment of agricultural extension.

The Food Policy Paper eschews discussion of major technical and administrative problems that plague the extension service. Rather, broad statements are made about strengthening the training and management of extension agents and innovating to get more information on production and farm management techniques to farmers (Kenya, 1981, pp. 1-19). Where details are provided for specific programs to reach these objectives, they are based on general lists of actions (Kenya, 1981, pp. 31-32) that provide little insight into the complex and often intractable problems that may hamper their execution. For example, Kenya's often-criticized agricultural extension service (Leonard, 1977) is to be improved by simplification of reporting procedures, provision of additional transport facilities, staff training, and dissemination of printed materials to farmers (Kenya, 1981, pp. 31-32).

The Paper's sections on extension services would have been substantially improved had they addressed the issues deliberated at the national seminar. These ranged from frank discussion of problems in the extension service to specific recommendations for improving the service's performance. Specifically, seminar participants discussed in some detail such topics as the advantages and disadvantages of expanding the number of extension agents or identifying

agents with particular types of crops; the limited organizational and communications linkages between extension agent and research station technicians; the absence of new, field-tested extension-production packages tailored to specific agro-ecological areas; the failure of extension leaders to develop new methods for increasing farmer contact; and the lack of imaginative use of progressive farmers through paraprofessional programs.

The proceedings of the provincial workshops include a number of comments that focused attention on additional administration and communication problems of the extension service not addressed by the policy paper. For example, it was pointed out that excessive administrative and paperwork tasks wasted time that could be spent in the field, that late arrivals of budget expenditure authorizations and slow tendering procedures slowed program performance, and that lack of adequate transport and insufficient petroleum supplies made it difficult to get into the field, particularly toward the end of the fiscal year; other problems cited were the lack of printed matter in farmers' own language outlining what extension agents advise them and underutilized potential for promoting extension through women's and youth clubs.

The question here is why a major policy paper is unable to be more specific. It can be argued that a longer paper would have been an ineffective paper, that more detailed discussions of constraints would have piqued sensitive vested interests and blocked publication, or that too specific a set of guidelines would have forced closure on program options for improving a floundering extension service. To be sure, these arguments have some validity; however, that other sections of the Paper have far more specificity on topics of lesser importance supports the point made here. For example, the Paper spells out in great detail a set of recommendations for the Ministry of Agriculture's Tractor Hire Service and Agricultural Machinery Testing Unit (Kenya, 1981, pp. 28-29). These are detailed because the planner who did the first draft was also working on mechanization problems with colleagues in an FAO-funded Testing Unit. This example illustrates what happens when central planners gain detailed knowledge of a particular issue through indirect participation based on personal contacts. It also argues for the utility of a knowledge-building process based on discussing particular food policy issues with those who manage programs or are served by them.

In sum, the draftsmen knew the extension service was ineffective but were either ill-informed about the reasons and possible solutions or under no pressure to be more specific about them. Clearly, the sections on these topics would have been more detailed and responsive had the Paper's authors attended the seminar and workshops prior to completing the final draft.

Overcoming the Tendency to Avoid Political Issues

Central policy analysts have a strong inclination to play it safe and gloss or avoid political issues. Broader horizontal involvement by other ministries and expanded vertical participation by provincial and district officers who face such issues on a regular basis can serve to bring them to the forefront of discussion,

increasing the likelihood of the exercise producing realistic policy recommendations. This benefit of increased participation is illustrated by the issue of land tenure.¹⁷

The Food Policy Paper discusses land tenure and use issues in very general terms.¹⁸ This is surprising given the increasing population pressure on Kenya's limited arable land and the effects of fragmentation, underutilized holdings, and speculation on efforts to raise smallholder production. There are three reasons for this. First, the political aspects of land tenure worried the draftsmen and senior Ministry officers. It seemed safer to them as technicians and bureaucrats to gloss over the issues. Their perceptions of what the politicians would tolerate set narrow limits on the Paper's coverage of land tenure and use. Second, jurisdiction over some land tenure issues rests with other ministries. Since they did not participate in the Paper's formulation, Agriculture's draftsmen were careful to avoid conflict with them. Third, lack of knowledge about technical details and the absence of a strong proponent of land reform among those drafting the Paper led to ambiguous treatment of the topic.

Yet discussions by senior members of the Kenyan government at the national seminar were quite forthcoming on land tenure constraints.¹⁹ Provincial

¹⁷ It is also illustrated by the Paper's avoidance of touching the political aspects of credit administration (Kenya, 1981, pp. 30-31) when the national seminar was quite open about the corrupt management of cooperatives. This was the case despite open criticism of the credit system in the Kenyan press. See, for example, *Daily Nation* (November 27, 1981, p. 5; and January 23, 1982, p. 1).

¹⁸ Sections under the title "resource development" call on the government to see that land is efficiently utilized; make district development committees responsible to oversee and coordinate key aspects of land tenure and use; assess the efficiency of existing tenure systems; and accelerate the process of land adjudication. The government is vaguely asked to deal with two politically sensitive topics: de facto subdivision of group-owned land and land speculation. In all, the Paper's discussion of these critically important matters takes up less than one page in the 40-page document (Kenya, 1981, pp. 23-4).

¹⁹ Among the issues addressed were: "Incomplete land adjudication processes which inhibit the ability of the farmer to gain credit for inputs necessary to intensify land use. More resources should be invested in the execution of adjudication objectives. Policies need to be formulated which promote the use of presently idle or underutilized lands. This can best be done by a dual strategy of providing incentives for full land utilization and tax penalties for land holders who do not seize such incentives. Areas of the country should be zoned in regard to land suitability for particular crops. Resources for producing such crops should then be limited to farmers in recognized areas of suitability. Finally, where possible farmers should move to zero-grazing strategies, turning pasture into farmland and using crop residues and commercial feed for fodder. Also a land use commission was recommended to clearly define land use and tenure policy" (Cohen, 1983, p. 30).

workshops witnessed lengthy and detailed discussions of land tenure problems.²⁰ Clearly, broader participation would have established that discussion of many land tenure issues was politically feasible and would have pressured the draftsmen to directly address them.

In this regard, it should be noted that the written memoranda of the small number of central planners and economists can make them individually responsible for the issues they raise and points they make. Participants at seminars and workshops are more submerged in a group, their oral statements taking on something closer to collective responsibility if accepted by the group. As a result, workshop participants had more freedom to speak out, giving their statements potential utility for contributing to the planning process.

A caveat is in order, namely that centrally produced policy papers can address politically sensitive issues that might be suppressed by expanded participation. Again, the Food Policy Paper illustrates this point, as it did raise what is perhaps Kenya's most pressing development problem: an excessively high population growth rate. Prior to the Paper's publication, the widely discussed fact that Kenya had one of the world's highest birthrates and desperately needed an effective population policy was not officially acknowledged. Yet, after the Paper's review of this issue, the government came out strongly for family planning. The inclusion of data about this problem and analysis of its relationship to food supply and nutrition can largely be credited to the draftsmen who in effect used the Paper to challenge the prevailing wisdom that Kenya had no serious population problem. So strong was this view that broadened participation might have reinforced rather than challenged it. Hence, among planners and economists who believe that policy papers best serve to dispute established but incorrect positions, broadened participation in the formulation process is viewed with distrust. Whether this concern is justified remains an important research question.

Challenging Assumptions of Planners

Broader participation by officials in other central ministries and field agents of development ministries can bring forth expertise and experience that can challenge assumptions or data on which an emerging food policy paper is based. This is illustrated by an example from the lengthy section of the Paper dealing with fertilizer.

In proposing programs to increase the supply and distribution of fertilizers, the Paper commits the government to mounting an extension campaign "to provide farmers with adequate information on suitable types and application

²⁰ For example, neglected farms are common and the Agricultural Act should be enforced to see that land is passed to farmers who will care for it and make it productive; land tenure and use issues in areas where farming and livestock compete with wildlife and tourism need to be addressed; squatters on public land should be assisted by purchase programs and supporting extension services; and slow and corrupt land adjudication processes should be ended and land adjudication programs expanded.

rates" (Kenya, 1981, p. 30). Yet a review of the provincial workshop proceedings reveals a more complex and expanded problem. Specifically, distributors and stockists have little knowledge of the inputs they sell, the inputs often stay on shelves too long and decline in quality, labels on packages generally have inadequate or unintelligible instructions, and inputs are frequently packaged in quantities unsuitable to small-scale farmers. Clearly, the problem is larger than just educating farmers on input use.

The question here is not whether the draftsmen held correct assumptions and used good or appropriate data. Rather, it is that increased participation produces important challenges that planners can use to test and refine their emerging recommendations and their underlying arguments. The proceedings suggest that had the draftsmen had forums for involving parastatal experts, field agents, merchants, and farmers, more useful and appropriate recommendations might have appeared in the published Paper.

Providing Access to Wider Interests

Expanded participation in food policy formulation exercises can help ensure that important interests and views are not excluded. This point is well illustrated by the inattention given in the Paper to nutrition.

The first draft of the Food Policy Paper contained no reference to nutrition. Subsequent drafts added reference, but mostly as an afterthought. Sections of the Paper that attempt to measure nutritional intake and per capita nutritional requirements, elaborate a nutritional policy, and formulate a nutrition program (Kenya, 1981, pp. 21-23, 43-44) are all highly general products of economists. Not only were experts from the Ministry of Health uninvolved in formulating the Paper, but even units within the Ministry of Agriculture concerned with home economics did not participate in drafting the sections on nutrition.

Inattention to nutrition is part of a larger representational problem. In Kenya, nutrition programs are typically run by women. Since no women participated in drafting the Paper and few attended the seminar or workshops, it should not be surprising that the Paper and discussion of it gloss over the topic. Hence, the case of nutrition underlines the need for conscious efforts to follow participatory planning strategies and to ensure that important groups are not excluded.

Attention on Implementation Constraints

The Paper failed to give systematic attention to the financial capacity of the government to carry out the proposed program, to priorities among recommended actions, or to implementation constraints and administrative capacity. Yet as soon as the Paper was made public these became salient topics of discussion.

The advantages of involving those who will be charged with implementation is illustrated by financial capacity issues. First, members of the involved ministries' budgetary units were not consulted by the Paper's draftsmen; analysis of cost estimates for all recommended activities were delegated to task forces

to be created after the Paper's publication.²¹ By not involving such officials, the draftsmen lost the opportunity to base their policy recommendations on financial realities. As such, they violated a critical rule identified by Naomi Caiden and Aaron Wildavsky (1974, p. 20):

Budgeting is of special interest to planners because they need money to make their plans operational. Plans may fail when tried, but they cannot be tried unless the desired allocations of resources are carried out through the budget process.

The failure of the Paper to link planning and budgeting concerns was identified at the national seminar and all provincial workshops. Discussion was most intense and focused at the national seminar. The participants debated the need to work out the cost of implementing the Paper's recommendations; develop recommendations sufficiently to let financial costs be estimated; set priorities among recommended programs and work out timetables; reduce subsidies to the inefficient parastatals the Paper charges with carrying out recommendations; and improve financial management in ministries concerned with food production.

Consideration of these issues was often focused and detailed, in sharp contrast to the Paper's avoidance of them. For example, among specific topics discussed were shortages of accountants to process development resources, inadequate financial management systems leading to a low rate of utilization of allotted funds, insufficient managerial status given to officers in the budgetary staff, and late issuance of Authorizations to Income Expenditures. To resolve these it was recommended that the Ministry's planning and budgeting capacity be strengthened and that greater financial accountability and project management authority be delegated to the district level.

Discussions at the provincial workshops were even more focused. There the primary emphasis was on uncertain, uneven, and inadequate budget allocations, excessive paperwork and complex reporting procedures, and lack of training in accounting techniques. Field officers also used the workshops to bring forth such operational problems as inadequate funding for present research and extension activities, poor collection of user fees for tractor hire and artificial insemination services, low staff morale due to late salary payment and rundown government housing, insufficient per diem for field travel, and lack of funds to run or maintain vehicles.

Clearly, by not involving budget officers in the Ministry of Agriculture, senior decision makers in other ministries competing for limited government funds, and field officers charged with managing budget allocations and carrying out programs, those who drafted the Paper were not pressed to address important aspects of a key implementation constraint. The result was a decline in the Paper's credibility.

²¹ Rough cost estimates are provided only for storage facility, grain reserve, fertilizer subsidy, credit, and beef and dairy marketing programs (Kenya, 1981, p. 44-45).

WOULD PARTICIPATORY PLANNING HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

The three levels of proceedings added different perspectives to the overall discussion of food issues. In essence, central sectoral planners and economists were oriented toward technocratic, statistical, and macro strategy and policy; seminar participants were surprisingly enlightened, capable of engaging in discussion on complex issues, and concerned with political and administrative issues of policy implementation; and workshop participants were eager to provide specific information, discuss constraints, and seek solutions.

The lengthy analysis of the Kenyan seminar and workshop proceedings that underlies the examples presented here (Cohen, 1983) gives empirical support to the contention that broader participation of involved ministries and their central and field staffs would have led to better identification of local constraints and opportunities and expanded awareness of issues central analysts are likely to disregard, overlook, or be ill informed about. Further, greater attention would have been given to local resource potential and variability and to administrative, fiscal, and manpower constraints. And focus on key issues and more constructive approaches to their resolution would have been sharpened and emerging policy objectives and recommendations clarified. Indeed, it is plausible to argue that the quality of information and special insights gathered by planners would have been further increased had the workshops been held in each of Kenya's 40 districts and involved more farmers, businessmen, and community leaders.

Some planners and economists are likely to reject these views. They would argue that increased participation would produce little new information on constraints and opportunities and place excessive emphasis on local concerns, obfuscating the need to develop a national perspective and would cite hampered ability of policy analysts to sharpen their focus on key issues and diluted analysis and decisive discussion. Such arguments may have some truth in them. It is acknowledged that there are costs as well as benefits from increased participation (Cohen and Uphoff, 1980), but it is submitted that the Kenyan experience presented here justifies moving beyond these conventional criticisms and further testing the potential for participation in food policy formulation exercises.

Several minor observations can be drawn from the case reviewed here. For example, the recommendations of seminar participants were still more assertions than technically established facts. This argues for more horizontal participation, bringing in university and technical specialists to help prepare the strategy paper. Since only insights and recommendations are sought and central government planners make the final decisions, there need be no fear of the old adage that "the camel is a product of a committee."

A number of the points and recommendations made in the national seminar and provincial workshops were not new, but they were public statements of facts and issues not covered in the government's policy paper. Together they provide an enriched background review that more likely reflects the reality of food production problems, the complexity of strategy options, and the constraints and

opportunities for implementing policy recommendations. It cannot be assumed that senior administrative officers, donor representatives, or expatriate advisers know these finer, more detailed points and recommendations. Indeed, it is argued that often they do not; hence, a bottom-up process that accumulates facts and insights and preserves them in an expanded, more specific national policy statement can have utility to those involved in development interventions.

In particular, it should be noted that while workshop participants did spend time complaining about the need for better terms of service and more government projects for their areas, their proceedings did not present the shopping lists or sets of grievances that planners tend to believe are the inevitable result of participatory planning. Rather, constructive proceedings were drafted, perhaps because the Paper was already official policy and opening speeches by ministers requested that discussion be focused on implementation issues. Had the process been bottom-up and the spirit been participatory, they might have expanded the knowledge of the center's economists, directing them in more pragmatic, problem, and action-oriented directions.

Those at the bottom tended to focus on short-run, tactical problems as opposed to long-run, strategic ones. Their discussion of those problems frequently resulted in recommendations needing resources. This suggests that if a bottom-up process is followed, planners will need to formulate criteria that allow the merit of competing tactical and strategic claims on limited resources to be evaluated and ranked. This is essential if central planners and the decision makers who approve their products are to avoid the all-too-frequent imbalance between public-sector responsibility and the availability of resources for fulfilling those responsibilities. At the moment, planners have few answers for the establishment of such criteria, yet they are essential if bottom-up planning processes are to be encouraged.

These conclusions must be tempered by an important fact addressed earlier: while the final draft of the Food Policy Paper appears to be an action-oriented document, this is only the result of hurried last-minute alterations in what was initially intended to be a general, analytical, policy-oriented paper. Hence, the criticisms of lack of specificity raised here may in several places have addressed straw men. A reading of the seminar and workshop proceedings, however, testifies to the rich set of insights and comments that are available for improving a food policy paper if the draftsmen seek them out through a participatory strategy.

Generation of Increased Support for Implementation

Two questions need to be addressed here. First, it is important to speculate whether increased support for and commitment to the Paper would have come from key political actors in the government and from central and field personnel of operating ministries had they been involved in actually formulating the Paper through a bottom-up process. Second, it is important to analyze whether the after-the-fact participation that occurred in the national seminar and provincial workshops generated implementation support for the Paper's recommendations.

The answer to the first question depends on whether increased participation would have led to more open discussion of vested political and economic issues, increased governmental and public awareness of the need to ensure effective implementation of the policy, expanded political pressure to carry the Paper's recommendations forward, or stronger commitment by central and field officers to translate the recommendations into program and project activities and to overcome past constraints resulting from jurisdictional battles and failed coordination. In addition, it is useful to ask whether those charged with implementation would have been more motivated in their execution of the policy had they been involved in its formulation.

Obviously, it is difficult to use the information presented here to answer these questions. But the answer to the second question lends support to the hypothesis that *ex ante* participation would have generated improved implementation of the Paper.

First, it is important to review a number of events that make it appear that the Paper achieved no results, a common perspective among the donor community. First, good rainfall and higher farm prices combined to produce adequate harvests and reserve maize stocks, reducing public concern after 1981.²² The end of shortages and queues took political pressure off the government. Second, Kenya passed through two politically troubled years after the Paper was issued. Throughout 1981 and 1982 the financial crisis facing the country deepened,²³ forcing the government to make substantial reductions in development and recurrent expenditures. Particularly hard hit were the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock Development, which had to revise downward their 1981/1982 and 1982/83 budget requests just at the time when they were asked to implement the sweeping recommendations of the Food Policy Paper (Leonard et al., 1983). Third, in August of 1982, Kenya was shocked by an attempted coup (Stamp, 1983). Throughout the second half of 1982 and most of 1983, the government was preoccupied with the political implications of the coup, holding national elections and forming a new cabinet.

These physical, political, and economic reasons make it difficult to formulate a causal argument about whether the national seminar and provincial workshops stimulated government commitment to implementing the Paper. It is clear that many of the Paper's central recommendations were not directly addressed by the government. Specifically, the five implementation committees promised by the Paper were tardily appointed and never met (in part because policy formulation is not an established institutional process and perhaps because the seminar and workshops relieved pressure), the recommendations in the Paper had little effect on ministerial budget allocation decisions or on the operational divisions of involved ministries and food parastatals (in part be-

²² Increased food availability and predictions of bumper crops were widely publicized after 1980. See, for example, *Weekly Review* (October 29, 1982, p. 28).

²³ See, for example, *Weekly Review* (September 24, 1982, pp. 24-31; October 1, 1982, pp. 17-20; March 25, 1983, p. 17).

cause the Paper ignores the financial realities of bureaucratic interests), and the action recommendations that concluded each provincial workshop were not specifically followed up (in part because of government crises and the resulting elections and reorganization).

Given all of the above, it should not be surprising that some critics believe that the Food Policy Paper failed because it was never intended by the government to be more than a political document symbolizing that it took the crisis seriously and was acting in the public interest. Such criticism is unduly harsh given the changed circumstances just described and the fact that the Paper's major recommendations were incorporated into the new 1984-88 Development Plan (Kenya, 1983). More importantly, such criticisms are remarkably naive about the complex political characteristics of Kenya's less formal policy processes.

Unlike the critics, senior officers in the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock Development understood why formal policy documents tended to have limited impact on decision making and recognized the constraints on their capacity to promote the Paper's recommendations. They knew that the key to gaining support from major political actors in the government was to get them on public record as supporting the Paper's objectives, a tactic the national seminar's participatory format aptly promoted. They also recognized that central ministry divisional chiefs had great potential to frustrate program and project initiatives supporting the Paper's recommendations, so they expressly used the seminar and workshops to generate group-based deliberations that built a broad-based consensus on programs and projects needed to increase food production. Finally, they realized they could use the provincial workshops to generate a *de facto* "national farm movement" based on provincial and district field agents of development-related ministries and calling for the kinds of government interventions outlined in the final section of the Paper.

Two specific examples can be given in support of these assertions. First, contrary to the experience of earlier years and expectations of economists in the government, technical recommendations for significant producer price increases were approved by the Cabinet, the government expressly acknowledging recent pressure for such increases from publicity surrounding the issuance of the Food Policy Paper.²⁴ Second, unlike previous extension reform efforts, a donor-supported, nationwide training and visit program was designed, tested, reviewed, and accepted within nine months of initial discussions, which was dramatic given the initiative's major changes (Hall, 1983). It is submitted that both successes in effect implemented important components of the Food Policy Paper and are directly attributable to the effects of the national seminar and provincial workshops.

Establishing that the seminar and workshops had these results cannot be done here; it requires a separate analysis of Kenya's bureaucratic processes and their effects on the formal recommendations of such government documents

²⁴ See *Weekly Review* (December 18, 1984, p. 14).

as development plans, cabinet memorandums, and sessional papers. However, sufficient research exists (for example, Moris, 1977) to support the rationale underlying the argument made here. First, oral discussions are a more effective media for reaching senior decision makers than the written word. Second, group deliberations involving high-level political participants and middle-level civil servants clarify the position of those with power and authority for those who must implement policies, thereby overcoming their tendency to be tentative and flexible about paper commitments until the views of the powerful are known. Third, formal minutes reflecting the groups' consensus about deliberations on an official document often are more important than the documents' recommendations themselves. Finally, group discussions are an essential prerequisite to overcoming the ambivalence senior decision makers hold of technical recommendations emerging from middle-level professionals in general and foreign advisers in particular. Clearly, the Kenyans who conceived of the need for the national seminar and provincial workshops understood their own system better than those who wrote the Paper and achieved important results by generating support for its recommendations through an overt participatory strategy.

LESSONS FOR PARTICIPATORY FOOD POLICY PLANNING

The Kenyan experience suggests that it is possible to stimulate meaningful participation in a centralized bureaucratic environment generally marked by limited attention to field staff opinion and that participatory involvement in policy exercises need not be charades or cynical manipulations of public opinion for political or bureaucratic purposes. It also demonstrates that vagueness in policy papers is not necessarily the result of clever bureaucratic efforts to avoid being pinned down to specific action requirements that may be difficult to implement. Further, recommendations made in carefully designed and focused seminars and workshops need not lead to bureaucratic overload or loss of central control. Finally, participatory strategies complement important aspects of African bureaucratic culture, strengthening in the process government consensus on and support for policy implementation recommendations; more generally, the Kenya case suggests that it is possible to design participatory policy exercises that are constructive, tempered, and politically acceptable.²⁵ Given these observations, it seems useful to conclude by offering some tentative comparative guidelines for increasing participatory content in food policy formulation processes.

First, the Kenya case suggests that a participatory process has four major stages. It should not begin with unguided public deliberations at the grass-roots level. Rather, the first stage should be the preparation of an initial background paper by central planners and economists. The paper should outline a strategy

²⁵ Briefer but similar conclusions on the utility of participation to planning in Kenya are found in Delp (1980, p. 7) and Hopcraft (1977, pp. 12-13).

and set general limits establishing what the analysts believe is technically, politically, and financially possible. In essence this is to ensure that deliberations resulting from broadened participation are focused and constructive, to provide participants with the larger picture to constrain the generation of laundry lists, and to limit the frustration that can emerge when politically inappropriate suggestions are rejected. The second stage should be a set of governmentwide deliberations on the paper similar to those held at the national seminar and provincial workshops. Redrafting of the paper on the basis of input from the second stage should occur in the third stage. All the recommendations of the second stage's deliberations will not necessarily be adopted, but draftsmen and decision makers must review them prior to completing the final policy paper and obtaining government approval of it. Finally, a fourth stage should occur inside the implementing ministries using the momentum of the second stage's participatory processes to facilitate the design and implementation of programs needed to carry out the policy's recommendations. In essence, the Kenyans successfully carried out all but the third stage, thereby testifying to the feasibility of this recommendation.

Second, a credible argument can be made that it is not necessary to hold the kinds of widespread public discussions described here. Rather, planners and economists preparing the policy can simply tour agricultural areas at some point in their deliberations, gathering data, testing assumptions, and obtaining suggestions. This argument is particularly favored by planners because of their professional concern with cost-effectiveness and, frankly, their tendency to believe they have an adequate knowledge about the things field agents and local people can tell them, largely because they have a broader frame of reference against which to test local input. At least two hypotheses here merit further testing, for the analysis presented here raises questions about how knowledgeable such policy analysts are about the wide range of issues surrounding food production and consumption²⁶ and points out the latent benefits of support and commitment that are likely to flow from seeking the involvement of those charged with implementation.

Third, given the diversity of policy environments it is not always possible to achieve in other countries the success the Kenyans did. At a minimum, however, draftsmen should tour the field thoroughly prior to developing their policy and implementation positions, obtain some systematic review of their early drafts by a representative group of central and rural actors affected by or involved in carrying out the paper's recommendations, and end with implementation seminars similar to those held in Kenya after the issuance of the policy statement. Other approaches could be developed, depending on the characteristics of the policy environment and the commitment to participatory objectives

²⁶ For example, the competing ethnic, religious, class, and political factions in any country greatly complicate the task of developing food policy positions that are politically workable but sensitive to interest groups. An example of how such interests complicate food policy formulation in Africa is found in Bienen (1983).

by those managing the process. Common to any such effort, however, should be the use of the press to keep the public aware of the process and, depending on the openness of the government, to provide a channel for public input in the process. Certainly the Kenyan case illustrates well the useful role the press can play in stimulating constructive public criticism of a food policy paper.

Fourth, the content of food policy papers can be spread along a continuum running from highly technical macroeconomic and statistical analyses to action-oriented project recommendations. The Kenya case suggests that the benefits of expanded participation are likely to be far greater at the applied, implementation end of this spectrum. Nevertheless, opportunities to expand understanding of participants on the more technical aspects of these papers should not be lost by foreclosing discussion of them. Nor should it be forgotten that several useful challenges to technical positions did emerge in the Kenyan proceedings.

Fifth, in the Kenyan context, and probably in other African bureaucratic cultures as well, the "informal messages" in the participatory processes may be more important than the formal content of the actual documents reviewed in terms of the ultimate effect of the policy paper on food production. Hence, even if planners and economists believe government officers and rural people have little to contribute to the policy formulation process, they would be well advised to seek to understand how to use participation to support their recommendations if they wish to see them implemented.

Sixth, there is some risk that participation in central decision making can "freeze" a policy in public life long after its salience has gone, precisely because of the aura participation can give to its legitimacy. Critics of Kenya's Food Policy Paper argue that this in effect happened in regard to the decision to seek self-sufficiency. That objective, set early on in the policy analysis process, was strongly reinforced by the seminar and workshops, making it difficult to effect those structural changes in grain marketing and export crop policies that are currently needed.

Seventh, the Kenyan experience indicates that participatory review exercises do not necessarily cause delays. While it took more than a year to finalize the Paper, both the seminar and the workshops were carried out within 45 days of the initial concept, and proceedings of those exchanges were available within days of their completion. Although the experience offers no evidence that the output of the proceedings could have been processed in a timely manner, it seems clear that participatory involvement need not be rejected on the grounds that it will delay important policy formulation efforts. However, they must be managed well, a point returned to below.

Eighth, in the final analysis, policy papers are political documents and must be the product of a government's political leaders, senior professional officers, and technical staff. Otherwise, they are likely to become unimplementable showpieces. While it is essential to expand public involvement beyond this core of participants, it is equally essential that expatriate advisers not dominate the exercise. Foreign experts can provide valuable comparative insights and

technical support, but they should serve as consultants to the design committee rather than as authors of the policy. That is, the participation of foreign experts (and for that matter donor representatives) must be carefully constrained, a need particularly important in the numerous African countries hosting large numbers of advisers and condition-setting mission directors.

Ninth, organizing and carrying out the participatory process described requires administrative skill. One foreign adviser assisted the Kenyans in carrying out the seminar and workshops in an efficient, timely manner. Yet he worked with administrative officers in the two Ministries who could have carried out the process successfully, if less professionally, without the adviser. Moreover, while the adviser helped ensure that the headquarters logistics were arranged and that background materials for the provincial workshops were delivered on time, the organization of facilities, proceedings, and reporting was largely carried out by Provincial Agriculture and Livestock Development Officers. This being the case, it appears reasonable to conclude that participatory policy formulation exercises of the type proposed here need not be rejected as beyond the administrative capacity of African development ministries.

And tenth, the financial costs are not excessive given the potential benefits generated. What is proposed here is not inexpensive. The direct costs of the national seminar and provincial workshops to Kenya were approximately \$75,000.²⁷ Costs limit the use of participatory strategies to very important exercises and constrain the number of iterations in such exercises. If the argument made in this paper is valid, however, then the costs of participatory processes are justified. After all, cheap policy formulation exercises can be very expensive if they are ill-informed, unsupported or incapable of effective implementation.

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