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FOODSECURE Recommendation 6

Effective governance and accountability frameworks are required for decision-making on food and nutrition security from the local to the global level

FOODSECURE Navigator brief, May 2017

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Short summary

The challenge for decision-making on FNS policy and action is to comprehensively as well as effectively address multiple dimensions - agriculture, health, trade, social services, education, environmental protection. We make four recommendations for improved governance at global and national levels

1. FNS governance at national level should adopt a comprehensive approach
2. Coordinate country-level FNS strategies within a (sub-) regional approach.
3. Global multistakeholder platforms should have an accountability framework
4. Strengthen the global governance of FNS

Full summary

1. Governance of FNS

The challenges of achieving food and nutrition security (FNS) involve a number of traditional sectors (e.g. agriculture, health, trade, social services, education, environmental protection), with various time-frames for action (e.g. transitory or chronic food insecurity) across a range of scales. In this governance landscape, fragmentation of decision-making is a serious risk and at the same time an often observed bypass for dealing effectively with complexity and safeguarding particular interests (Candel, 2014; Gillespie et al. 2013). Therefore, the challenge for decision-making on FNS policy and action is to comprehensively as well as effectively address multiple dimensions.

FOODSECURE has analysed the functioning of governance systems at the level of global coordination, regional and national policy-making and multistakeholder partnerships. While these studies merely help to open up a relevant area of research, several insights can be already be drawn from them.

¹ This brief was written with input from P-M. Aubert, A. Alpha, J. von Braun, M. Torero based on various working papers and papers developed under FOODSECURE. An earlier version of this brief was presented at the FOODSECURE final conference, 12 October 2016, Brussels.

2. FNS governance at national level should adopt a comprehensive approach

FNS is traditionally a public policy domain, but a number of (private) actors (donors, NGOs and increasingly private sector) now intervene in policy-making processes. Multi- or intersectoral collaboration is often recommended as a way to consider the multidimensionality of FNS. FNS policies have a strong inertia around agricultural production issues, which contributes to hamper the adoption of a comprehensive approach to address the multidimensionality of FNS (Alpha and Gebreselassié, 2015). The intersectoral collaboration is made difficult by the weight of actors' sectoral visions and logics in the policy processes (path dependency). Development partners play a key role in the FNS policy processes while they are internally organised by sectors. These arguments are illustrated for two main case studies: Ethiopia and Burkina Faso. IDDRRI studied Ethiopia as a showcase of good practice (forthcoming), and shows that its mechanism of coordination between development partners (national government and international donors) can also be considered as a negotiated innovation mechanism, that facilitates experiments on new issues and approaches. Being able to experiment and evaluate policies, policy instruments, and even new policy framings, is going to be key to strengthen the governance of FNS.

3. Coordinate country-level FNS strategies within a (sub-) regional approach.

Each national context is singular, and even though there are many commonalities across country-level FNS strategies, they need to be tailored to local needs. The regional scale is a relevant level of governance because (i) of analogies between situations, in spite of national differences, which have been explored in various typologies; (ii) the importance of regional common markets (when they exist) for development and food security, and thus common norms; (iii) it can be argued that resource-poor countries should organise grain reserves with neighbouring countries in the framework of regional cooperation and/or trade agreements. These features make the regional scale relevant for developing long term visions and policy dialogues.

Strategic reserves hold stocks for emergency situations only in order to supply the most vulnerable during periods of food shortage or price hikes. In doing so, reserves are very efficient to overcome temporary supply shortages (Kalkuhl et al., 2015). Such reserves can be held at the national level, for the purpose of intervening in markets during severe food crisis when the private sector fails to provide sufficient supply. A cost-effective way is to hold joint regional reserves that make use of risk pooling to reduce required reserves since production shocks are not perfectly correlated among member countries, as already proposed by Koester (1986) and recently examined for the case of India where the management of grain reserves features elements of coordination between sovereign states (Saini and Kozicka, forthcoming). The regional reserves are further explored in FOODSECURE for the

cases of ECOWAS (Kornher and Kalkuhl, 2016) and ASEAN (Mujahid and Kornher, 2016).

4. Global multistakeholder platforms should have an accountability framework

Multistakeholder platforms often have no accountability framework, and therefore no capacity to monitor their effects, which is very necessary in future partnerships. Since 2002 and the creation of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), six similar platforms have been created in the field of FNS. However, these platforms have also three important features. First, from an institutional point of view, their functioning is totally disconnected from the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), which contributes to the growing fragmentation of the governance regime for FNS. Second, they often gather actors unequally resourced, and lack clear functioning rules allowing the least resourced stakeholders to voice their concerns. Many civil society organisations (CSOs) have reported that they experience difficulties in being heard within these platforms. Third, their accountability framework is often weak. Not only does it lack a clear normative framework against which to assess ex-ante and ex-post the impact of a given project, but it generally does not provide any monitoring mechanism, as is the case for the Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture (Aubert et al., 2015).

5. Strengthen global governance: the functioning of the CFS

The global institutional arrangements in support of sustainable agricultural development and FNS show signs of “serious malfunctioning” (von Braun and Birner, in press). Amelioration will be required to effectively steer towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals on hunger, nutrition, sustainable resource use, and other goals that intersect with the global food system.

The global governance of food security has been evolving rapidly over the last 10 years, with reforms of the CFS, the G7/G8 and G20 stepping in the wake of two episodes of spiking food prices, the rise of FNS strategies by regional platforms (e.g. the CAADP under African Union), the rise of multistakeholder platforms such as Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) at global level and multisector coordination at country level. The CFS has been said to be “the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform dealing with food security and nutrition”.

Reforms of the Committee on World Food Security

The reformed CFS has generated a series of interesting outputs. It has first allowed to create a mechanism for including scientific evidence in its decision base, thanks to the work of the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) and to create a “new” institutional culture centred on policy formulation for FNS. The increased legitimacy of CSOs at both global and domestic levels is another important output of the CFS reform. Last but not least, the reformed CFS has produced two international non-



binding norms that are to frame agricultural development and investments with respect to FNS issues, especially in Southern countries: the principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment (RAI) and the Voluntary Guidelines on the responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT). However, its effectiveness is reduced by the shortage of alignment with actions from multilateral and multistakeholder platforms (Aubert et al., 2016).

A lively academic debate has emerged on the future of the CFS. A sociologist's view has been that the legitimacy of CFS can be further strengthened through better alignment with actions outside its remit (Eklin et al., 2014). Both the final statement of the Pittsburgh G20 and the launch of the New Alliance for Food and Nutrition Security in 2012 at the Camp David G8 are perhaps the most illustrative examples of the ambiguous role of the G8/G20 with respect to fragmentation. They indeed gave orientations that sensibly differ from the way in which the CFS considers agricultural development for FSN and the role of the private sector therein. Also, the role of the CFS in facilitating and monitoring the implementation of the SDG 2 (the "zero hunger" goal) has still to be clarified.

Facilitating much-needed science-policy interaction on food, nutrition and agriculture

Economists have argued, from a theoretical perspective, that the mandate of the CFS or of any other existing institution is too restrictive for the breadth of governance needed for the food system; they propose to gradually migrate from the current CFS framework towards an international panel that addresses the international public goods in the global food system (von Braun and Birner, 2016). The panel would facilitate much-needed science-policy interaction on food, nutrition and agriculture. Both views coincide on a) the point of supporting the CFS itself in the coming years, either as the one forum or of several the key platform in a very fragmented space; and b) the EU has a specific role to play, as it intersects also with G8 and G20. The CFS should now enter the second phase of reform, based on developing accountability and best practices. Both reform and redesign call for a long-term vision underpinned by careful analysis of the experiences with CGIAR, IAASTD, IPBES, HLPE and other science/policy interfaces.

At an operational level, the emergence of a global Agricultural Market and Information System (AMIS) has been one of the most tangible results of global coordination efforts for creating greater transparency in global grain markets. Continued improvement of AMIS is needed and also there is a need to keep improving on early-warning mechanism for identifying abnormally high price volatility in the futures prices of staple food crops on a daily basis. Apart from political economy considerations that could continue preventing disclosure of stocking levels, China is facing statistical difficulties to build a strong agricultural information system in the perspective of the implementation of the international arrangement on Agricultural Market Information System (Schwoob, 2015).

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