



1) What went wrong in your country which prevented the most vulnerable and the poor to improve their access to safe and healthy food?

The following policies and strategies were formulated and implemented by the Government of Honduras including some shortcomings:



- Late endorsement of the 2008 budget income and expenditure.
- Municipalities' poor capacity in executing and settling funds allotted to the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PSR) in addition to a change in the mechanisms to approve government disbursements.
- There is no capacity-building and technical assistance extension system offered by contracted service providers to producers.
- Government reinforced National Suppliers Commodities in order to drop costs of some of the goods of basic basket; nevertheless, these have limited coverage (mostly urban) and could not reach the most vulnerable.
- Government promoted the growth of strategic food reserve through the 'Instituto Hondureño de Mercadeo Agrícola (IHMA)' (the Honduran Institute of Agricultural Marketing); yet, this action favoured more the urban areas despite the fact that the majority of Honduras people live in rural areas where poverty is mostly concentrated.
- In the country's major urban markets prices were monitored with the aim of ensuring that speculation will be stopped
- At the end of 2008, basic basket's cost was 6121.5 Lempiras, while the minimum monthly wage was 3428.4 (half of the total value of the basic basket). Poor households whose income did not cover the cost of a basic food basket were estimated at about 600,000 households (INE, 2008). This situation shows that, despite an increase in the minimum wage, this was still far below the cost of the basket (6,121.5 Lempiras).
- Furthermore, general application of the minimum wage increase has affected micro and small businesses to the extent that price rise has gone beyond its equilibrium point. This situation has generated, along with the financial crisis, job loss and thereby the disaffiliation of some 130 thousand people from the 'Instituto Hondureño de Seguridad Social (IHSS)' (Honduran Social Security Institute).
- Although the value of certain foods (wheat and rice) and agriculture inputs fell worldwide, this was not immediately felt at country level (because of a new pricing structure with lowering costs tendency).
- Overall malnutrition was reduced by 8.8 percentage points. The percentage of malnourished has decreased from 21.4% in 1991 to 12.6% in 2005-2006¹. However the rate of children malnutrition and chronic malnutrition in rural areas are over twice the rate of urban areas

¹ Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio, Honduras 2007: Segundo informe de país, Sinopsis bajo la coordinación del PNUD y se utilizaron para la medición los indicadores sobre nutrición global crónica y aguda.

We can see some progress from this data although there is still a lot to be done to overcome some of the key issues related to child malnutrition. Indeed no action has been taken in priority areas such as scanty access to education and to productive resources (land and capital) and lack of technical assistance to the disadvantaged sectors of the population. Hence Honduras suffers of structural poverty problems that hold back vulnerable groups' development.

2) Did you see any improvement in addressing hunger and malnutrition problems since the High level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy held last June at FAO headquarters, Rome?

Since last High Level conference we cannot speak of any improvements related to malnutrition in the country due to the numerous global economic issues, such as rising food prices, increase in fuel prices and the global financial crisis. All these facts had a negative impact on the majority of the population who had reduced capacity to purchase food. Besides, natural phenomena affected Honduras affecting agricultural production and assets disposal.

However, the government has provided technology aid to all producers with a view to support intensive basic grains production; besides, FAO supported food production through the Initiative on Soaring Food Prices. Based on the same institutional arrangement, about 5 thousand farmers affected by floods could count on agricultural inputs and technical assistance and recovery of their livelihoods.

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