The crisis in African agriculture

A more effective role for EC aid?

PELUM ASSOCIATION

PRACTICAL ACTION
Technology challenging poverty

Preface

Practical Action, an international development organisation (formerly ITDG), in conjunction with PELUM Association, a regional network of civil society organisations working in agriculture and rural development, is implementing an awareness-raising project funded by the EC.

Grassroots organisations and farmers' movements are active in local advocacy, but rarely gain the opportunities to access European and international policy debate or the opportunity to influence policy makers in Europe. The project aims to bring voices and views from African farmers to the European Union, allowing them to be heard by policy makers and the wider public. Six policy briefings will be produced by the project about the impact of European energy and agriculture policy and practice on Africa and in particular issues arising in the context of Europe/Africa development cooperation.

This paper, based upon the first policy briefing, was produced to coincide with the G8 meeting, and was prepared by Rachel Berger, Stuart Coupe and Absolom Masendeke of Practical Action; Joe Mzinga, PELUM Regional Desk; Nancy Omolo, consultant to Practical Action East Africa Regional Office; and Stephen Makanya, consultant to PELUM in Zambia.

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Contents

Abbreviations and acronyms

ACP	Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Region
AfDF	African Development Fund
AFREPREN	African Energy Policy Research Network
ASAL	Arid and semi-arid land
AU	African Union
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CDTF	Community Development Trust Fund
CF	Conservation Farming
CFA	Commission for Africa
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
CTA	Technical Center for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation
DFID	Department For International Development (UK)
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office
EDF	European Development Fund
EIB	European Investment Bank
EMOP	Emergency Operation, set up by the WFP
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FITCA	Farming in Tsetse Controlled Areas
G8	Group of 8, a summit of heads of states of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, UK and USA with the EU as an observer
GoK	Government of Kenya
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
GTZ	German Technical Agency
HDI	Human Development Index
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross

ICRISAT	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IGADD	Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development
ISD	Institute of Sustainable Development (an NGO in Ethiopia)
KARI	Kenyan Agricultural Research Institute
KENFAP	Kenya National Federation of Agricultural Producers
KVAPS	Assistance to the Kenya Veterinary Association Privatisation
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NIP	National Indicative Programme
NMK	Njaa Marufuku Kenya, which means loosely Ban Hunger in Kenya
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PACE	Pan African Programme for the Control of Epizootics
PELUM	Participatory Ecological Land Use Management
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RIP	Regional Indicative Programme
SADC	South African Development Community
SSA	Sub Saharan Africa
STABEX	Stabilization of Export earnings
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAC	União Nacional de Camponeses
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States of America
WFP	World Food Program

Executive summary

Poverty and hunger on the increase in Africa – aid still has an important role

Africa is the only region in the world where poverty and hunger are on the increase. The number of undernourished Africans increased by one million a year from 2000 to 2002, though the proportion of people undernourished reduced from 36% to 33% over the previous ten years. On current projections Africa will be the only continent that will fail to meet the international community's targets to reduce poverty, hunger and disease – the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – by 2015. Indeed the World Bank estimates that, on current trends, sub-Saharan Africa will meet them in 2147, more than a century off target. While diverse factors such as civil conflict, corruption and adverse terms of trade contribute to Africa's problems, it is recognised that more and better aid will be a necessary condition to reducing poverty in the continent.

Agriculture remains key to poverty reduction

Agriculture remains key to achieving the poverty targets of the MDGs in Africa. Nearly 80% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa live in rural areas and 70% of this rural population are dependent on food production through farming or livestock keeping for most of their livelihood. Small-scale farming provides most of the food produced in Africa, as well as employment for 60% of working people.

Agriculture constitutes the backbone of most African economies; is the largest contributor to GNI, the biggest source of foreign exchange, and the main generator of savings and tax revenues.

But Africa's agriculture is in crisis and set to get worse

However, agricultural productivity is dropping in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, per capita agricultural production fell by about 5% over the last 20 years while increasing by 40% in other developing countries. As the focus of development assistance shifts towards export-led growth and state support for agriculture is progressively withdrawn, the productivity of small farmers has declined due to:

- the lack of access to land and resources;
- the degradation of natural resources;
- poor access to markets;
- low investment in agricultural research, training and extension services;
- the lack of private sector services to fill the vacuum left behind.

Added to these are two further problems. HIV/AIDS is reducing life expectancy and the productive capacity of farming households – in the past two decades 7 million farmers and agricultural workers have died of AIDS in the most affected countries.

Climate change, in the form of increased extreme weather patterns, particularly more frequent and prolonged droughts, is expected to have a further detrimental effect on Africa's agriculture.

Yet aid to agriculture has declined

Farmers in sub-Saharan Africa are struggling to adapt to these crises but support is declining. Whilst total aid to sub-Saharan Africa remained stable during the 1990s, the proportion allocated to agriculture declined year on year. For example, aid to agriculture in SADC Member States declined as a proportion of total aid from 20% in the early 1980s to 8% by 2000. If poverty in Africa is to be reduced, aid to agriculture must be increased substantially and made to work more effectively.

African farmers and governments are calling for more support

There is a growing recognition among key actors such as the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the Commission for Africa that a new emphasis has to be placed on aid for African agriculture. The Commission for Africa, for example, calls for a doubling of aid to the continent and recommends a 50%increase by 2010 in donor funding for small-scale irrigation and post-harvest infrastructure as means of direct support to small-scale farmers. NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) also highlights the need to support food security by increasing small farmers' productivity.

Practical Action research indicates that African farmers themselves call for:

- Greater aid focus on the needs of marginal farmers and pastoralists;
- Support for long-term food security instead of food aid;
- Improved access to land, credit, water and appropriate seeds and breeds;
- Improved access to relevant agricultural advice and support; to appropriate technologies; and an agricultural research system that reflects their needs;
- A bigger voice in decisions regarding the allocation of resources to agriculture.

EC aid to agriculture tends to benefit better off farmers and undermine poor farmers

The European Commission (EC) manages the world's largest development aid programme. EC aid to agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa has not been particularly well focused on resource-poor farmers. It is targeted towards the funding of commodity associations; the privatisation of agricultural extension services, particularly veterinary services; and support to commodity sectors, including encouragement of farmers to affiliate to commodity associations in order to obtain support. This approach assumes an ability to pay or participate that is unrealistic for the majority of farmers living below the poverty line.

EC sectoral support focuses on commodity crops, cultivated by better-off farmers, rather than staples. The privatisation of extension services, unless carefully designed to deliver at community level, can also prejudice resource-poor farmers since, for example, service provision to remoter areas is often not profitable.

When EC aid does reach poor farmers it is usually in the form of food aid. This often has an adverse impact on local production systems and markets, and leads to longer-term dependency on aid.

EC aid reforms threatens support for food security

There is some evidence that the EC is beginning to take support to agriculture more seriously. However, the fundamental drive of the EU-ACP Cotonou Agreement is to prepare the existing commercial and industrial sectors in Africa for integration into the world economy by 2013. Without a change in policy it is unlikely that increased aid flows will be targeted to tackle the crisis facing the vast majority of small-scale farmers, the majority of Africa's poor.

EC supported food security programmes, for example through NGOs, have been effective in helping resource-poor farmers to access to land, mobilise resources, and introduce sustainable production techniques. They are developed in line with the farmers' demands outlined above. Yet food security programmes remain a tiny proportion of aid to the agricultural sector.

Proposed reforms to EC development assistance, due to start in 2007, will reduce funding for such food security programmes and will focus more on bilateral assistance to governments. However, direct budget support can work against ministries of agriculture, often one of the weakest government ministries. If the EC is serious in its commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals to reduce poverty in Africa it must increase, not reduce, its commitment to resource poor farmers and food security on the continent.

The crisis in African Agriculture:
a more effective role for EC aid?

1 Introduction

The European Commission (EC) manages EU co-operation in African in accordance with the Cotonou Agreement signed in 2000 via the European Development Fund (EDF). The EDF is the world's largest aid programme, to which EU member states make voluntary contributions. Under the ninth EDF (for the period 2001-2007) the EU will have a potential spending power of around €13.5 billion (£9 billion). Using the examples of Kenya and Zambia, this paper shows that the substantial EC aid programme and influence is only marginally impacting upon African smallholder farmers, whose households constitute the majority of the poor in the continent.

Most organisations campaigning on the European role in development focus on trade issues. This paper addresses aid aspects of European-African relations which to date have received relatively little scrutiny from civil society organisations. It is intended that this paper will stimulate awareness and debate in the neglected area of EC aid effectiveness in Africa. With increased aid funding following the G8 meeting in Gleneagles, there could be a possibility of making poverty history in Africa and of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, but only if the aid resources are used more effectively than is currently the case.

The paper is organised in the following way:

- The crisis in African agriculture is described and responses of African farmers and governments to the crisis outlined;
- The EC aid programme to sub-Saharan Africa is explained, with particular attention to the agricultural sector and to food aid ;
- The effectiveness of the aid programme to agriculture is then examined and recommendations put forward for how this can make a greater contribution to the eradication of poverty in Africa.

2 The crisis in African agriculture

2.1 Declining productivity

Despite decades of food aid and donor-funded development programmes, the number of food-insecure households in many African countries has barely diminished. Whilst for developing countries as a whole per capita agricultural production increased by about 40% between 1980 and 2001, in sub-Saharan Africa it fell by about 5%. In preparation of this paper, Practical Action and PELUM have been working with farmers in Kenya and Zambia, two countries that exemplify the negative trends in African development. Since 1980, Zambia's Human Development Index has fallen, and Kenya's since 1990. HIV/AIDS is a major factor, affecting the Index through reduced life expectancy[1]. On current aggregate trends in sub-Saharan Africa the Millennium Development Goals will not be attained until the year 2147.

Africa is the only region in the world where poverty is on the increase; by far the highest incidence of under nourishment is found in sub-Saharan Africa – one third of the population is undernourished[2]. In Africa, the vast majority (up to 80%) of the population live in rural areas, and 70% of this rural population are dependent for a large part of their livelihood on food production through farming or livestock keeping; the majority of them are women. Agriculture provides 60% of all employment, and constitutes the backbone of most African economies – in most countries it is still the largest contributor to GNI, the biggest source of foreign exchange, and the main generator of savings and tax revenues[3]. It is also the dominant provider of industrial raw materials. Agriculture thus remains crucial for economic growth in most African countries, but the problems of agriculture in Africa are manifold. Productivity is falling, poor people lack access to land and other resources, there is low investment in research and poor dissemination of research findings to the farmer. Adverse market conditions and poor access to markets are also major problems for farmers in Africa. Gender inequality is another major constraint: most farming activity is undertaken by women, yet in some countries they are not entitled to own land or to grow cash crops.

Added to these are two further problems: climate change and disease. Dramatic changes in the cyclical pattern of rainfalls and drought have occurred in recent decades; in the arid and semi-arid lands of sub-Saharan Africa, the last normal rains were in 2002 and rivers and irrigation canals are running dry. This is attributable to climate change caused largely by increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere as a result of fossil fuel use primarily in industrialised countries. Since 1985, more than 7 million farmers and agricultural workers have died from AIDS in the 25 countries most affected by the epidemic. Malaria is still a major killer disease, and with a changing climate the disease is expected to spread further.

Farmers are struggling to adapt to these crises in the contexts of declining support from their governments and the international community. Whilst total aid disbursements to Africa have risen from an average of $15 billion in the 1990s to $20 billion in this decade, support to the agriculture sector has stagnated. Aid to agriculture in SADC Member States has been declining as a proportion of total aid since the mid 80s.[4] (See table 1 below). This decline has occurred while food insecurity in Africa continues at high levels. Donors fund a continuing programme of Food Aid, which, while undoubtedly saving lives, is not assisting the emergence of resilient agricultural systems to redress food deficits.

Table 1 Aid to agriculture in southern Africa

Donors	1980-1984 **% of total donation**	1996-2000 **% of total donation**	2001 **US$ million**
African Development Fund (ADF)	22	14	171
European Development Fund (EDF)	28	3	62
World Bank	23	5	183
IFAD	69	70	95
Total multilateral	27	7	511
Bilateral	15	8	542
Overall total	**20**	**8**	**1,053**

Source: Carla Eicher, Paper presented at Inwent, IFPRI, NEPAD and CTA Conference, Dec. 2003.

There are many reasons why aid policies have been hitting wide of poverty reduction targets. Too often government and donor policies have focused on treating agriculture as an extractive industry, producing commodities for markets through the application of inputs, regardless of social and environmental consequences. In order to raise agricultural productivity in Africa amongst the millions of small-scale farmers who fall outside this production model, approaches are required that recognise the fragility of the land and environment and value the natural processes that agriculture can incorporate to reverse degradation. There are many success stories of how starting even on poor degraded soils, agricultural productivity has been increased and people's lives transformed as they are empowered to take control of their lives and move out of extreme poverty. The question is, why are these cases relatively isolated and not mainstreamed? Why are the processes proven to work in these cases not the substance of development programmes by the larger donors, but only implemented by a few NGOs? The concluding section of this paper argues that appropriate aid to agriculture can make a significant contribution.

2.2 Responses of small-scale farmers

The majority of the poorest people in rural areas in Africa are engaged in agriculture. Their channels for dialogue with the authorities responsible for agriculture are weak or non-existent, yet when their views are sought, farmers are very clear in their responses. Practical Action and PELUM, working with small-scale farmers and farmers' organisations, have learnt from them that they have five key demands from donors and their governments[5]:

- Access to essential inputs including land, credit, water and appropriate seeds and breeds.
- Agricultural advice and support that complements, builds on and values farmers' own knowledge, giving them access to affordable appropriate technology to improve production and add value to their produce; this should be supported by an agricultural research system that is farmer-led so that it produces results that reflect their needs.
- Agricultural development programmes that focus on the needs of marginal farmers and pastoralists that are delivered locally, rather than commodity-focused programmes that are nationally run.
- Participation in decisions regarding the allocation of resources to agriculture, through strengthened farmers' organisations.
- An end to regular programmes of food aid and instead, governments working with communities to identify alternative longer-term programmes of support to ensure food security.

These demands are articulated by new and growing farmers' organisations in eastern and southern Africa, which are co-ordinated under the Eastern and Southern Africa Farmers' Forum. In a recent workshop for farmers and NGO staff hosted by PELUM in Nakuru, Kenya[6], the unanimous view was that food aid is never a priority for Kenyan farmers; development aid is what is needed to develop agricultural productive capacity, coupled with support to develop marketing.

2.3 Recent high-level responses to the crisis

In 2002 at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg the European Union member states supported a number of emerging initiatives on both sustainable development and the development of Africa. Most notable was the overwhelming support for the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), which aims at economic growth and reducing poverty across the continent. This included the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) produce by FAO with the NEPAD steering committee in June 2002.

The CAADP has been endorsed by the African Heads of State and Government as a framework for the restoration of agriculture growth, food security, and rural development in Africa. The NEPAD vision for agriculture is that the continent should, by the year 2015:

- have improved the productivity of agriculture to attain an average annual growth rate of 6%, with particular attention to small-scale farmers, especially focusing on women;
- have dynamic agricultural markets within countries and between regions;
- have integrated farmers into the market economy and have improved access to markets to become a net exporter of agriculture products;
- have achieved a more equitable distribution of wealth;
- be a strategic player in agricultural science and technology development;
- practise environmentally sound production methods and have a culture of sustainable management of the natural resource base.

The CAADP sets out a wide range of actions to revitalise African agriculture and provides a framework for action[7]. The three pillars for investment highlighted are:

- extend the area under sustainable land management and reliable water control systems;
- improve rural infrastructure and trade related capacities to improve market access;
- support to productivity-increasing activity among small farmers to increase food security.

In pursuing CAADP, African governments are recognising the importance of agriculture to increasing prosperity. Most African countries' national agriculture development plans now incorporate recommendations from the CAADP document, and are working towards allocating at least 10% of national budgetary resources to agriculture, agreed in the African Union Maputo declaration of 2003 to be achieved within five years. It is vital that donors respond similarly by increasing their aid allocations to agriculture.

An example of a positive country level response comes from Kenya. In response to the NEPAD report, the Government of Kenya has recognized that the agriculture sector receives inadequate public funding – currently around 4.5% budgetary allocation against at least 10% recommended by NEPAD at the Summit held in Maputo in July 2003. The Ministry of Agriculture, through the Kenya Food Security Programme and with support from FAO, has developed a draft *Action Plan for Eliminating Hunger*. A new initiative, the Fast Track Action Programme is allocating up to US$10.0 million in 2005. Around half of this is projected for spending on Community-Driven Food Security Enhancement projects[8]. The Action Plan aims to reach 1,000,000 farm families in Kenya by 2010 through a focus on community empowerment, decentralised management, enabling policies, emergency prevention, improved information systems and the strengthening of partnerships[9]. Proposed action includes raising productivity of food insecure farmers, restoring the natural resource base on which agriculture depends, and improving nutrition for the chronically hungry and vulnerable.[10] An estimate of the investment needed is of more than US$ 120 million annually. All these initiatives await concrete commitments of donor funding.

Mobilisation of financial resources

Preliminary estimates in the CAADP suggest that the total investment required between 2002 and 2015 would have to be of the order of US$251 billion. NEPAD's proposed strategy is to seek and reach agreements with up to three financial partners among G8 members and multilateral organisations to take leadership for providing and coordinating financial assistance for the implementation of the proposals.

The Secretariat has undertaken the first two missions to meet with the US Government and the World Bank.

The Commission for Africa, set up by Tony Blair in 2004, is another recent response to the crisis on the continent. The Commission's report is hard-hitting and identifies root causes and a new way forward. In support of the NEPAD CAADP, irrigation and post harvest infrastructure are prioritised for G8 support.

Our Common Interest: the Report of the Africa Commission

"Barely 4% of arable land in sub-Saharan Africa is irrigated compared to 40% in South Asia. In the last decade, the amount of land under irrigation grew slowly, at a rate of between 0.5 and 0.7% a year. Poverty can be as much as 20 to 30% lower in areas where a higher proportion of land is irrigated. Rain-fed agriculture is far more susceptible to the large climatic variability that faces the region. With irrigation, cropping intensity can rise by 30%.

"Recommendation: As part of a wider set of measures to promote agricultural and rural development, Africa must double the area of arable land under irrigation by 2015. Donors should support this, initially focusing on funding a 50% increase by 2010, with an emphasis on small-scale irrigation. This should bring an additional five to seven million hectares of arable land under irrigation by 2010, and would cost in the region of US$2 billion per year. Appropriate micro-irrigation systems and technologies are already in use in East and Southern Africa, and extending them to a wider area and network of producers should not be unmanageable in this timeframe.

"Post-harvest infrastructure is also key. Post-harvest losses in many parts of Africa average around 50% for fruits, potatoes and vegetables compared to 25% for developing countries overall149. This undermines both food and income security for smallholders and poor people. Accordingly, we call for support to address post-harvest losses, including storage infrastructure and improved rural transport and energy infrastructure. It is estimated that for maize, for example, with a budget of between US$30 million and US$50 million over a 10-year period, potential efficiency savings of US$480 million a year could be possible."

from *Our Common Interest: The Report of the Africa Commission*, 2005, Section 7.3.3 Agriculture and rural development.

3 The role of EC aid

3.1 Aid flows from the EC to sub-Saharan Africa

Global

EU member countries provided development assistance of over €28.7 billion in 2002[11] – around 55% of global aid flows – of which €6.5 billion was managed by the European Commission[12] (EC) on behalf of the countries. The European Commission's Development Policy Statement of 2000 set out objectives and priorities for EC aid:

- The fostering of sustainable economic and social development
- The smooth and gradual integration of the developing countries into the world economy
- The campaign against poverty

In practice, EC development assistance focuses on key areas including:

- Linking trade and development
- Support for regional integration and cooperation
- Support for macro economic policies
- Transport
- Institutional capacity building particularly in the area of good governance and the rule of law
- Food security and sustainable rural development

Currently, the EC uses 14 regions to define its relations with other countries. Africa is part of the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Region (ACP). The Cotonou Agreement of 2000 is the framework agreement defining the relationship between ACP countries and the EC and it has three main pillars: financial cooperation, political cooperation and trade cooperation. The EC Delegations in-country are responsible for the preparation, appraisal and implementation of all EC programmes, in close cooperation with the country government.

Under the most recent European Development Fund (EDF), from 2002-7, €13.5bn was allocated to the ACP region, €10bn for long-term development, financing the National Indicative Programmes, €2.2bn for investment through the European Investment Bank (EIB) and €1.5bn for regional co-operation, under the Regional Indicative Programme (RIP).

Regional

At a regional level, the Regional Indicative Programmes are financed through the European Development Fund and the General Community Budget. Regional Indicative Strategic Plans provide an overall framework for EC support. The 9th EDF for Eastern Africa earmarks €1.3 billion for regional co-operation. Regional Support Strategies will be developed for groupings of countries defined by the ACP countries themselves, but which should preferably correspond to existing regional groupings with a mandate for economic integration. Negotiations on the content of such a Regional Strategy Paper are not yet concluded for eastern Africa.

Currently in southern Africa the EC has a Regional Strategic Plan for the period 2002 to 2007 with a budget of €223 million. The EC works with SADC[13] structures in the disbursement of these funds. Three key sectors are targeted in the regional plan:

- Economic Integration – which involves working with regional economic bodies such as COMESA[14] and IGAD[15] on economic integration through improved trade policies in the region
- Management of Natural Resources
- Transport and Communications

On the last, the priority is improvement of key road corridors in the region. Under management of natural resources, a priority is management of fishing resources in coastal waters. Livestock and disease control is another regional level issue being considered. There is a clear emphasis on trade and transport rather than poverty reduction.

The EC undertakes to provide humanitarian and emergency assistance to the ACP countries “faced with serious economic and social difficulties” and for as long as necessary to deal with the emergency needs. The EC through its humanitarian aid office (ECHO) is one of the world’s biggest humanitarian aid funders. Between 2001-3 Africa received 37% of the total humanitarian aid funding, which amounted to over €200m per year, to deal with the consequences of drought and conflict, providing support for refugee assistance and drought relief. Assistance is channelled through 200 ECHO operational partners who include UN agencies (UNHCR, WFP), The Red Cross (ICRC) and NGOs.

National

The National Indicative Programme (NIP) defines the overall framework of EDF funding to a particular country. Realisation of the programme is through the vehicle of individual projects that are identified jointly by the recipient government and the EC desk officer, supported by the EC in-country Delegations. The framework for decisions on projects is the Country Strategy Paper (CSP), which EC Delegations are required to draw up, to build local ownership of the process where possible and provide a mechanism for coordinating the aid programme of the EC Member States and the EC.

The CSP is intended to provide an analysis of the country requirements for development assistance so that EC delegations can tailor programmes to a country's needs rather than mechanistically continue funding in line with previous assistance programmes. CSPs are written by experts appointed by the EC, taking into account national policies after consultations mainly with government officials. To date there is little evidence of involvement at the formulation stage of civil society organisations, or "non-state actors" as they are described in EC policy.

The Country Support Strategies formulated to date by African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries allocate only 7.5% of resources to food security and rural development, against 35% for transport and 28% to macro-economic support. The pattern of aid is towards economic growth, with the expectation of a trickle down effect benefiting all social groups.

EC aid to Kenya

The European Commission is Kenya's largest cooperation partner after the World Bank, accounting for about 15% of the Government's annual budget. EC assistance, under the 6th, 7th and 8th EDFs has totalled €920 million, covering programmable (€412 m) and non-programmable aid (€508 m).[16] The 9th EDF allocates €170m[17] as follows.

Table 2 Kenya allocations under Economic Development Fund (EDF) 9

Various sectors	Allocations in %
Agriculture and rural development	25 – 35
Transport/roads infrastructure	20 - 30
Macro-economic support	40 - 50
Other programmes (private sector debelopment, non state actors, regional initiative, reserve)	5- 10

Source: Kenya – European Community CSP 2003 – 2007, p. 29.

In earlier funding cycles, (6th, 7th and 8th EDF), roads were prioritised, receiving a total of 43% of EC funding while rural development only got 10%. However there are signs that in terms of current aid allocation, agriculture is now the favoured sector of the Kenyan government and that the EC is responding positively by re-orientating its aid accordingly. Nevertheless transfer of EC aid to the Kenyan government under the 9th EDF has been delayed – there are ongoing political difficulties associated with the charge from the donor community that the government has failed to stamp out high-level corruption.

EC aid to Zambia

The EC is the largest donor of development aid to Zambia. The 8th EDF amounted to €138 million and together with other EC loans and grants the total aid package was well over €300 million. The 9th EDF framework A (programmes) provides €240m.

Table 3 Zambia: Economic Development Framework (EDF) 9 – Envelope A

Various sectors	allocations in €m	allocations in %
Transport	90	37.5
Institutional reform and capacity building	40	16.8
Macro-economic support	90	37.5
Non-focal areas (health and education)	20	8.2

Source: Zambia – European Community CSP 2001 – 2007

The CSP closely follows the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), which concluded that the private sector should become the prime actor of the economy and through growth generate employment and additional tax resources for the Government – a market liberalisation approach. A remarkable feature is that an agriculture focus is totally absent from EC cooperation in Zambia. This is despite the fact that nearly 70% of the population is employed in agriculture. Agriculture in Zambia generates between 18-20% of GNI, provides the main livelihood for about 67% of the labour force, and remains the main source of income and employment for rural women who constitute 65% of the total rural population.

3.2 EC aid to agriculture and food security

The European Commission's vision statement on food security, *Fighting Hunger*, issued by DG Development in September 2001, states that

> *"It is important to ensure that aid reaches rural areas where the majority of the poor reside. The decline in spending on agriculture and rural development is a matter for concern because these sectors are vitally important to the livelihoods of the poor. Donors need to review their support to these sectors taking into account the changing context of rural development."* [18]

This appears to set very clear poverty reduction goals for aid to agriculture through direct support to the livelihoods of poor farmers. In practice, the most prominent feature of EC aid to the agriculture sector has been support to privatisation of agricultural extension services, particularly veterinary services, and support to commodity sectors, including encouragement of farmers to affiliate to commodity associations in order to obtain support. Whilst these reforms may well boost the efficiency and competitiveness of certain commercial sectors, they are certainly not focused on the livelihoods of the poor.

EC aid to agriculture and food security falls under several categories. The main one is budgetary support, some of which is channelled into agriculture in accordance with country support programmes. In some countries, the EC funds NGO food security programmes (as in Zambia) and in many countries of sub-Saharan Africa, money for food aid is provided. There is also aid to national institutions such as research institutes, and regional programmes related to livestock disease control.

Food aid

The EC *Fighting Hunger* paper offers the following guidelines on the deployment of food aid:

> *Arguments for or against the use of food aid should be made on the grounds of its efficiency as an instrument to address specific problems and situations, such as the following:*
>
> - *To preserve lives and assets during natural and man made disaster*
> - *To protect vulnerable social groups including refugees, internally displaced persons, the disabled, AIDS orphans and the destitute*
> - *To tackle chronic malnutrition where this seriously impairs people's abilities to engage in normal productive activities.*

In practice this kind of targeting has very hard to achieve, with food aid often having an adverse impact on local production systems and markets, and leading to longer-term dependency on aid. In order to avoid these outcomes, food aid must be timely, appropriate (ie. providing food that is culturally and nutritionally suitable) and proportionate (in the right quantities for the scale of need). Too much food aid leads to resale on local markets; aid arriving after the crisis has passed will also affect local grain prices just when farmers are trying to recover. African farmers and NGOs have been active in campaigning against bringing subsidised food from distant areas: food dumping is a plank of the Trade Justice Campaign.

The EC developed a concept called LRRD, the Link between Relief, Rehabilitation and Development, in the mid 1990s, to ensure that relief programmes move to rehabilitation in three stages:

i. Food distribution to prevent a deterioration of the health of people affected short term).

ii. Ensure vulnerable people develop food security following a crisis through seed distribution, income generation, diversification of production, restocking of livestock

iii. Support setting up of legal and institutional framework for crisis prevention e.g.

information systems creation, and building up national food stocks.

If the LRRD approach had been effectively implemented this type of emergency aid should be declining, but it is not. As a donor both of emergency assistance including food aid and of development assistance, the EC plays a key role in ensuring the LRRD concept is implemented. A review of food aid and current procedures for moving towards LRRD[19] suggested proposals for greater co-ordination of all actors and a review of EC procedures in order to reduce delays, including decentralising decision-making to EC delegation staff. Specific measures included:

- More flexibility in the EDF to allow for moving funds into food security programmes in areas that had received food aid
- A budget line on rehabilitation
- LRRD included as a key concept in Country Strategy Papers
- Measures to ensure community participation from an early stage in the intervention process.

Subsidised assistance to poorer households most severely affected by poor rains or socio-economic constraints will be needed through several more droughts. Methodical assistance with improved varieties, better extension advice or strengthened markets can lead to gradual independence. Meanwhile, community-driven solutions can be supported and enabled. Inter community structures exist in all countries of East Africa that are prone to food scarcities due to drought: Sustainable Agriculture Community Development Programme (SACDEP-Kenya), a PELUM member, works with farmers in different rainfall zones. In times of drought communities in areas of higher rainfall contribute food to needy areas – involving only local transportation costs. Each year since 1997, over 1,000 farmers have contributed food to a similar number of families for a month.

Agriculture

EC aid to support agricultural production varies from country to country, reflecting the complexities of negotiations between EC delegations and national governments. Examination of EC aid to agriculture in Kenya and Zambia illustrates some common threads such as the focus on strengthening export-oriented commercial agriculture and private sector provision of agricultural services.

Kenya

A study of Kenya has shown how the rate of growth of the non-agricultural sector depends strongly on growth in agriculture.[20] Major improvements in agricultural and rural development sectors are therefore fundamental to addressing economic growth and poverty reduction, yet EC funding to this sector as a proportion of its total aid up until 2004 has been less than 5%.

In the 9th EDF (2004-7) where agriculture and rural development allocations have been boosted to 25-35% of the total, the main objective of EC intervention is to support the achievement of the PRSP sectoral growth target of 6% for Agricultural and Rural Development, a target set out in the joint FAO/NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, 2002.

The EC priority is to support the two main areas identified in the PRSP:

- Empowering rural communities in the local development process and providing the conditions for accelerated private sector economic activity. Immediate priority will be given to the rehabilitation of rural infrastructure, starting with access roads repair and maintenance; provision of electricity to markets and market centres; and construction and maintenance of water supply and dams, using locally raised funds and grants from central government.

- Support to local service delivery and infrastructure provision through capacity building, policy and institutional reforms, and financial assistance to key public good/service providers/facilitators.

In the 9th EDF attention will also be paid to cross-cutting environment/ biodiversity issues, the role and position of women and, when appropriate, to trade-related technical support[21].

On-going rural development projects include €72m for the Pan African programme on Control of Epizootics (PACE), support to KARI, (the Kenyan Agricultural Research Institute), assistance to the Kenya Veterinary Association Privatisation (KVAPS) and a programme in western Kenya on Farming in Tsetse Controlled Areas (FITCA).

Although the overall EC programme in Kenya does not have a poverty focus, some expenditure is aimed at the remoter rural communities. This includes the continuing support for the Arid Lands Resource Management Project, in the most marginalised areas of the country where livelihoods are almost entirely natural resource based. Another programme, the Community Development Programme (CDP) (€27m), which aims to support small self-help programmes throughout Kenya, has shown the value of decentralised management structures and the potential of working directly with civil society in alleviating poverty. However, problems with managing aid delivery at the local level have led to the watering down of the programme by restricting its application, as shown in the box below.

EC funding for Community-based projects in Kenya

The Community Development Programme (CDP) has been very successful at attracting applications; over 4000 project applications were received during the first phase of the programme. Out of these, 235 were approved for funding totalling Ksh 586,071,657 (€ 5.86.m), of which 223 are now completed. Since the onset of the Community Development Programme, more than 7,700 applications have been received, and 177 projects have been approved for funding totalling Ksh 629,945,606 (€6.39m). This is an average of around €36,000 per project.

However, the process through which poor communities have to undergo to obtain funding is long and tedious. The number of applications far exceeds the funds available, so most communities who apply are disappointed. For example in October 2003 a call for proposals in the newspapers resulted in 8,000 proposals out of which only 400 were selected. The criteria for selecting the proposals is unclear as many community organisations have good projects but do not know how to write good proposals or meet the procedural requirements.

Currently the CDP has Ksh 200 million (€2m) unspent, which if not spent by December 2005, will have to be returned to the EC. This is enough for up to 55 more projects, nearly a third of the total currently funded. Because putting a call for proposals is a long process, the CDP has decided to give the money to GTZ, a German international NGO, to allocate specific communities that have been marginalised over the years like El Molo, the smallest Kenyan tribe. The choice of GTZ was arrived at after evaluating the community level work of various NGOs, and being impressed with GTZ's work with the local communities in Kilifi, on the Kenyan coast.

Funding communities directly through the CDP is a positive move, though the process of allocating funds is too bureaucratic. Because the disbursement process has been so slow, the CDP appears to have been forced into rushed and inconsistent measures in order to spend the balance of the resources before the budgetary deadline.

The EC has also supported rural income diversification, rational land use and conservation through its Community Wildlife Initiatives and Biodiversity Conservation Programme. It has also supported rural water supplies e.g. in 1997 it supported rehabilitation of small dams in ASAL districts in the country.[22] The proportion of aid going to these initiatives is however a fraction of the total aid programme. Moreover, the process of submission of applications for approval is lengthy, featuring cumbersome application forms and bureaucratic processes for modification of programmes during implementation, all of which places high costs and uncertainties on NGOs and communities.

Zambia

Agriculture, mining and tourism were selected in Zambia's PRSP as the sectors with the best potential for equitable growth and private investment and the EC agreed with the Government of Zambia that assistance should focus on:

- Assistance to Government and private sector in an institutional development and capacity building programme
- Improvement of road infrastructure
- Provision of loans and capital

However, page 17 of the CSP states:

> *"In the absence of adequate sector policies for Agriculture and Tourism and in view of the dominant role given to private enterprises for the development of these sectors, further E C interventions are not considered at this stage."*

This decision was taken despite the fact that the vast majority of the population depends upon agriculture. This effective conditionality led to the Zambian government rapidly developing a National Agricultural Policy for 2004-2015 in order to get aid. Involvement of farmers in the development of this document was limited.[23] The following specific priority objectives are proposed.[24]

a. all-year round production and post-harvest management of basic foodstuffs

b. production of agro-based raw materials for industry

c. increase in agricultural exports

d. income and employment generated through increased agriculture production and productivity

Policies a) and d) could potentially benefit the majority of farmers. Up to 9m hectares of reasonable or good soil is not yet cultivated and only 12% of the land is irrigated. The government would like to change this situation by increasing budgetary support to facilitate and support the development of a sustainable and competitive agricultural sector that assures food security as national and household levels and maximises the sector's contribution to GDP. Since the budgetary allocation to agriculture from 2000 and 2004 was between 2 and 4% there is huge scope for further support to smallholder famers through increased spending – provided it is allocated to appropriate interventions. It is as yet unclear whether the EC will be contributing to this programme.

In Zambia the rationale for the allocations of aid is improved access to markets where the potential exists to produce surpluses for export. However, these priorities may not improve access to local markets for the majority of subsistence farmers, who are not located in areas of high potential, and whose access to markets is affected not by the condition of trunk roads, but by the poor state of minor and feeder roads.

With the focus on support for private enterprises, the EC's approach in Zambia in any case would not seem to support an agenda favouring smallholder farmers growing mainly staple crops. Most farmers are not eligible to join commodity associations. Moreover, encouraging farmers to focus on export crops makes farmers into specialists who, in the face of climate change and the need to increase the resilience of food producers to adverse conditions, will continue to face production challenges.

The EC budget line on food security totals €5.4m, and this covers both food aid and NGO programmes. The latter usually focus on strengthening agricultural systems in marginal farming areas, or at least working with small-scale farmers.

A major three-year project of €1.87m project to improve household and national food security for non-mechanised farmers is pending approval, based on Conservation Farming systems. Conservation Farming (CF) systems reverse the destruction of the natural agricultural resource endowment and support higher yields on a sustainable basis. There is some evidence from research[25] that suggests CF is likely to be relevant to up to 440,000 smallholder farmers in Zambia, who do not live in the most marginal areas. Benefits take time to be generated, and depend on thorough training of, and commitment from, beneficiaries. Conservation farming is not therefore a solution to food security for the majority of Zambian farmers, so while this is a programme targeting a significant number of small-scale farmers, it is regrettable that such a large proportion of the budget line is focusing on an approach that will not assist the poorest farmers.

While rural agriculture-dependent communities may benefit indirectly from improved roads and from EC budgetary support to education and health, the EC currently is not giving direct support to agriculture, due to the absence of a government-prepared agriculture strategy at the time the CSP was prepared. The EC has supported the privatisation of veterinary services. This has not been a successful policy in terms of improving services, with a high livestock mortality rate among small farmers, who cannot afford treatment. A study for the UK research institution, ODI, suggested that one impact of the privatisation of veterinary services is that farmers have to pay more to have their draught oxen treated.[26] This same study found that currently extension services cover barely 25% of farmers; most of the smallest farmers, including most women farmers, have no contact with the extension services. Agricultural extension is now proposed for privatisation too.

3.3 The effectiveness of EC aid to agriculture

Article 19(i) of the Cotonou agreement[27] states:

> "*The central objective of ACP-EU co-operation is poverty reduction and ultimately its eradication; sustainable development; and progressive integration of the ACP countries into the world economy.*"

Article 32(ii) states:

> *"Cooperation shall also take account of*
>
> *b) the worsening drought and desertification problems, especially of least-developed landlocked countries."*

Despite poverty reduction being one of the three pillars of EC aid, there is no clear evidence of a direct poverty impact for most EC aid to agriculture, nor an evaluation of its effective at poverty reduction. Though the EC has recognised the importance of the agriculture sector in the 2001 paper *Fighting Hunger*[28] this is not yet being reflected in their development assistance.

There is a disparity between the kind of aid provided to African countries, including aid to agriculture, and the expressed needs of small-scale farmers whose need is the greatest. Most aid to agriculture in Africa currently focuses on export crops, cultivated by a minority of farmers, usually the better off. Market development seems to drive much of the aid agenda of the EC[29] – but without addressing poverty there will be very weak markets in Africa for European goods, and economic integration will tend exacerbate existing inequalities.

Sectoral support focuses on commodity crops rather than staples, which are cultivated by better-off farmers. Privatisation of extension services, unless carefully designed to ensure community-based provision, generally means that only services that are profitable are provided – not, for example, services to remoter areas. Where increase in agricultural production is focused on larger farms using more capital-intensive techniques, farmers tend to spend on more sophisticated goods produced outside the locality, and the impact on poverty and hunger is less marked.[30] In contrast, where agricultural development has occurred on small farms with labour-intensive technologies, income is generated for farmers who spend predominantly on locally produced goods and services, creating other jobs and incomes for those in rural poor households.

Most of the EC aid that actually reaches poor farmers is in the form of food aid. Because the recommended guidelines on administering food aid (LRRD) are not being followed[31], food aid tends to lead to dependency and the undermining of local production systems. Current approaches to food aid distribution largely ignore the potential of local seed and food production and distribution systems; they also bypass other locally inspired livelihood solutions to endemic droughts.

A recent review of seed and fertiliser relief programs in Zimbabwe by ICRISAT provides strong empirical evidence that agricultural relief programmes need to move away from an emphasis on handouts to encompass the pursuit of more explicit development goals.[32]

For two decades, relief operations spending millions have failed to evaluate sufficiently, and learn lessons, on how to run effective relief and rehabilitation programmes. The opportunities exist for strengthening community initiatives (such as seed fairs and local seed-saving), improved community-focused extension and support of local input markets through using them as a medium for delivery of relief supplies or cash vouchers – but have not been taken.

It is difficult to establish how African governments and the EC decide priorities at country level. One of the criteria is that the EC favours areas where it has competence. This seems to have an overwhelming importance in resource allocation, as reflected in the statistics, which show that almost uniformly, a high percentage of funds go on transport in most countries (see for example Table 2).

Some of the best practice has emerged from projects funded under the EC's Food Security budget line. The approaches range from community based planning, training for transformation, transformational leadership development, participatory extension development and participatory policy making. To achieve this needs a long-term – 5-8 years – development commitment, the main resource being skilled facilitation and agronomic expertise.

The EC's own evaluation of a programme it funded in Zimbabwe[33] stated:

> *"Despite the relatively small levels of cash input, the project is having widespread success … The project is seen as a model for transformation of the local and provincial structures in their relation with the farming communities."*

Case studies abound.[34] Based on acceptance of the evidence of the benefits of sustainable agriculture, a programme of support to farmers and agricultural extension and policy reform can readily be developed.

4 More and better aid for agriculture: a vision for the future

Raising the output of small and marginal farmers is a necessary condition for eradicating rural poverty in Africa. It also has a larger multiplier effect in the rural economy than increasing productivity in commercial farming[35]. The EC must back up the rhetoric found in the 2001 vision statement *Fighting Hunger* by giving strong and systematic support to any African national and regional plans which specifically target poor, food-insecure farmers. A wealth of experience in approaches for enhancing livelihood security and household resilience has been amassed not least through the work of NGOs[36]. If the EC is to make an effective contribution to tackling poverty and reaching the Millennium Development Goals in sub-Saharan Africa over the next ten years, then its support to the agriculture sector needs to be redirected in this way.

One of the EC's most effective budget lines in terms of attracting programmes that reach poor farmers has been the food security budget line. NGO-funded programmes under this budget have achieved significant benefits for communities through an approach that ensures access to land, sustainable production techniques and other resources and builds the capacity of farmers to mobilise resources. Yet, decades after these and similar programmes first showed their potential, aid towards these interventions is still a tiny proportion of the total; investment has not taken place into scaling up.

Current proposals for a new system of financing EC development co-operation, due to commence in 2007, will result in reduced funding for food security programmes. The Food Security theme will go, and instead of the current thematic programmes, funding will be more closely related to government programmes. Unless EC delegations can influence African governments to prioritise food security, it will be a challenge to ensure that aid to agriculture is effective in reaching small-scale farmers who have benefited from programmes under the EC's food security budget line. Consultation by UK's Department for International Development on its own proposed agricultural development strategy raised concerns that shifts towards direct budget support result in a diversion of public funds that otherwise would have been allocated to agriculture[37]. Direct budget support results in a shift in decision-making processes and resource allocations that work against ministries of agriculture, which are often one of the weakest sector ministries least capable of making a convincing case to central finance ministries for scarce budget resources.

At the same time, to continue the learning process in adapting agriculture to changing social and climatic conditions, direct funding to NGOs/CSOs to carry out food security projects should be doubled rather than being phased out.

While direct budget support strengthens ownership by recipient governments over resource allocation decisions, it distances donors from their responsibilities in implementing effective strategies to reduce poverty. It seems too early to move in this direction: African governments are beginning to wake up to the need to move resources into agriculture, but so far it is uncertain whether in practice this will happen to the extent needed. Our view is that the EC needs itself to demonstrate support for agriculture by strengthening its programme funding in this direction rather than phasing it out.

EC delegations are required to involve civil society and non-state actors in the discussions about policy in order to increase local ownership of such policies and to encourage increased level of government accountability. The EC delegations should not be satisfied with processes where civil society is not involved at the planning stage. Decisions on resource allocations that have not involved civil society (as stated in the Cotonou agreement) as an equal partner cannot be considered legitimate. Thus, where government and civil society views seem to diverge, as in the type of aid to agriculture, there is a role for the EC to support the fostering of debate with all stakeholders and draw on experts from all sides on the most appropriate forms of aid. The EC surely has a role in persuading African countries to prioritise food security.

The EC's principal funding to the agriculture sector through the EDFs must be designed in national forums, ensuring the representation of organisations of small-scale farmers, in order to learn from and build upon food security approaches developed in the course of EC-funded Food Security projects.

Practical Action and Pelum

Practical Action (formerly ITDG) is an international development organisation that uses innovative thinking and simple ideas to help people change their life for the better. We understand the places where we work and the people we work with. And we work together with communities sharing knowledge, multiplying benefits and influencing others to bring about real and sustained change.

Practical Action is a member of and contributor to the More and Better Campaign, working towards a substantial decrease in the number of hungry and undernourished people and a major increase in quantity and significant improvements in the quality development aid for agriculture and rural development. Practical Action is also an active member of the UK Working Group on Development and Climate Change, which is raising awareness about the impact of climate change on developing countries. Practical Action is the working name of Intermediate Technology Development Group Ltd.

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PELUM Association (Participatory Ecological Land Use Management) is a regional network of over 160 civil society organisations in east and southern Africa, working towards sustainable agriculture, food security, and sustainable community development in the region. The Association, launched in 1995, is currently working in ten countries: Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

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7 Implementing the CAADP and restoring food security in Africa, Forum meeting Washington DC, October 5th-6th 2004

8 NMK Revised Draft – *A Call for Action to Eradicate Hunger*

9 Reaching 1 million farm families translates to 6 million people assuming an average of six persons per family.

10 Millenium Project Hunger Task Force, *Halving Hunger: it can be done*, 2005.

11 This figure includes Member States' bilateral programmes

12 European Commission Fourth Annual Report on development policy and assistance, 2004

13 The SADC (Southern Africa Development Community) was established in 1980 as a loose alliance of nine majority-ruled States in Southern Africa.

14 COMESA is an alliance of 20 African States forming a free trade area.

15 The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is the successor organization to the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), created in 1986 by six drought stricken East African countries to coordinate development in the Horn of Africa. IGAD seeks to foster regional security and sustain economic development.

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