

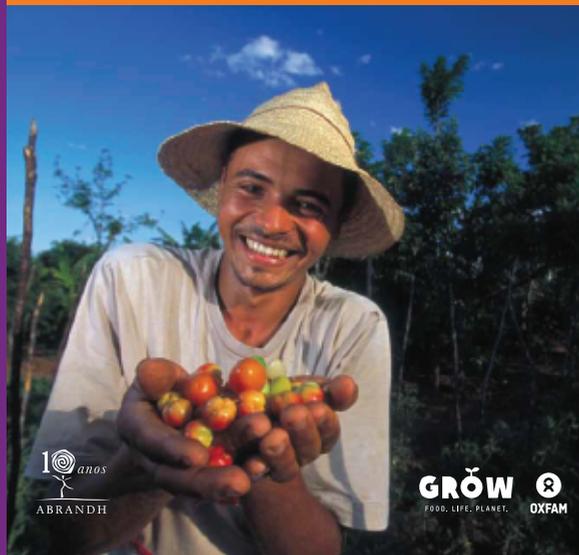
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Learning from Brazil, by *Olivier de Schutter*

**A source of inspiration for the successful
implementation of 'Zero Hunger' in West Africa,
by *GROW West Africa***

Effective public policies
and active citizenship

Brazil's experience of building a
Food and Nutrition Security System



© Oxfam International, February 2014.

These two texts were written in January 2014 as a Preface and an Editorial to the French version of the book 'Effective Public Policies and Active Citizenship: Brazil's experience of building a Food and Nutrition Security System', co-authored by Marília Mendonça Leão and Renato S. Maluf and published in 2012 by Abrandh et Oxfam.

This book can be accessed for free at: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/effetive-public-policies-and-active-citizenship-brazils-experience-of-building-313051>

Oxfam would like to thank very much Mr Olivier de Schutter to have accepted to write this Preface as one of his last actions as the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. Oxfam also thanks very much the GROW partners in West Africa (APESS, IPAR, POSCAO, RBM, WILDAF/WA) for their collective contribution to the Editorial.

This publication is copyright but the text may be used free of charge for the purposes of advocacy, campaigning, education, and research, provided that the source is acknowledged in full. The copyright holder requests that all such use be registered with them for impact assessment purposes. For copying in any other circumstances, or for re-use in other publications, or for translation or adaptation, permission must be secured and a fee may be charged. E-mail : publish@oxfam.org.uk.

For further information on the issues raised in this document please e-mail: jgerard@oxfam.org.uk

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Learning from Brazil

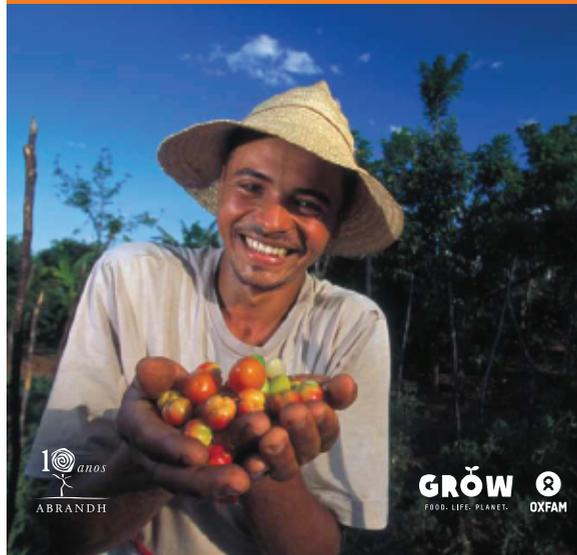
by Olivier de Schutter

A source of inspiration for the successful implementation of 'Zero Hunger' in West Africa

by GROW West Africa

Effective public policies
and active citizenship

Brazil's experience of building a
Food and Nutrition Security System



10
anos
ABRANDH

GROW 
FOOD. LIFE. PLANET. OXFAM

GROW
FOOD LIFE PLANET

Learning from Brazil

Eradicating hunger and malnutrition, even in places where these scourges are widespread, is not an impossible dream; it can be achieved, provided that the goal is supported by strong political will at the highest levels, and by governance mechanisms guaranteeing civil society participation and government accountability. That is why the right to food makes a decisive contribution to the success of food security strategies. And that is why Brazil's experience matters, and contains a message of universal relevance.

Brazil is no longer alone. Other states are following in its footsteps, with varying degrees of success. Latin America has led the movement towards the adoption of framework laws in support of the realization of the right to food. The Brazilian law establishing the National Food and Nutrition Security System (SISAN) dates back to 2006. But food and nutrition security laws based on the right to food were adopted in rapid succession as early as 2003 in Argentina, and subsequently in Guatemala (2005), Ecuador (2006 and 2009), Venezuela (2008), Colombia (2009), Nicaragua (2009) and Honduras (2011). More recently in Mexico, following the launch of a 'Crusade against Hunger' pegged to the right to food as included in the Constitution since 2001 and after the Legislative Assembly of the Federal District adopted a framework law in 2009; a decree adopted on 22 January 2013 by the Secretariat of Social Development (SEDESOL) established the National System for the Crusade against Hunger. The decree created the Inter-Ministerial Commission for the Implementation of the Crusade against Hunger (comprising 19 ministerial departments and institutions); established a National Council of the Crusade against Hunger, an inclusive body allowing for a permanent dialogue with the private sector and social actors, the academic community and international players; and created community committees made up of beneficiaries of social programmes. Still other states on the Latin American continent are moving in this direction.

Why Latin America? First of all, due to the consistent mobilization of the region's civil society organizations and their long-term commitment. But also, thanks to the FAO's support for the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative (Iniciativa Latin America y Caribe sin Hambre 2025), launched in 2005 by Brazil and Guatemala with support from Spain, and through the support provided for the process by the FAO Right to Food Unit and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. It has also benefited from the commitment of parliamentarians to the issue. The Parliamentary Front against Hunger, set up in the wake of the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative, serves as a network for sharing best practices among national parliaments and to encourage the drafting and adoption of legislation to enhance the protection of the right to food. A number of parliamentary fronts have also been established at national level. These fronts have been strengthened by initiatives by regional parliamentary institutions such as PARLASUR, PARLATINO, the Andean Parliament, the Central American Parliament and the Forum of Presidents of Legislative Powers of Central America and the Caribbean.

It is good to see that other regions are following in the footsteps of Latin America, notably several regions in Africa. In Malawi, a proposal was made by civil society organizations in 2010 for a national food security bill; largely patterned on Brazil's SISAN law, which includes the suggestion of setting up a Specific Fund aimed at financing the different policies that would contribute to the realization of the right to food in the country. In Mozambique, the Technical Secretariat for Food and Nutrition Security (SETSAN), an inter-secretariat coordination body, led an inclusive process to the same effect. In Uganda, the Nutrition Action Plan 2011-2016 mentions the need to fast-track the adoption of a Food and Nutrition Bill, which should lead to the creation of a Food and Nutrition Council. Sometimes, when the federal structure of the state so permits, regions or provinces can move in the same direction. Thus, in Tanzania, Zanzibar adopted a Food Security and Nutrition Act in 2011 which reaffirms the obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the right to food, establishes a National Food Security and Nutrition Council, and instructs sector ministers to mainstream food security and nutrition concerns in their policies and programmes, and include adequate resources in their budgets for that purpose.

West Africa is also moving in the same direction. In 2004 and 2006, respectively, Senegal and Mali adopted framework laws centred on the establishment of agricultural policies, allowing farmers' organizations to contribute to policy design. Although restricted to the agricultural sector and not extending to food security policies as a whole, they constitute a first and promising step towards greater accountability and participation. Cote d'Ivoire and Niger have given an independent constitutional basis to the right to food in their respective constitutions. Niger appears to be more advanced, as, since 25 November 2010, Article 12 of its Constitution recognizes that 'Everyone has the right to life, health, physical and moral integrity, to healthy and sufficient food, to drinking water, education and instruction under the conditions defined by the law.' At the same time, in Nigeria, a process is underway to amend Chapter 4 of its Constitution on Fundamental Human Rights to include the right to food.

The adoption of right-to-food framework laws offers a set of advantages which makes them important tools in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. Sometimes framework laws set targets for governments to achieve, allocating responsibilities for taking action to different branches of government and coordinating their actions. However, most often, these laws set out general objectives and establish institutional mechanisms to move towards their achievement. They are procedural in nature, establishing institutions and defining a process, without presupposing the outcome, and leaving it to the actors involved to design a cross-sectoral right-to-food strategy. Framework laws ensure that such strategies are designed and continuously monitored through an inclusive and participatory process involving government and civil society organizations. Following the Brazilian example, these laws establish national food security councils, often linked to the highest level of government and including as members both representatives from relevant ministerial departments and civil society. It is not unusual for such councils to provide recommendations to an inter-ministeri-

al task force ensuring inter-sectoral coordination across departments; this is indeed the case in Brazil, where the National Food and Nutrition Security Council (CONSEA), two-thirds of whose members represent civil society organizations, acts as an advisory body, addressing recommendations to the Inter-Ministry Chamber of Food and Nutrition Security in charge of implementing the strategy. In other countries, such as Guatemala and Ecuador, food and nutrition security councils not only act as advisory bodies, but can also make binding decisions.

The citizen participation fostered by this approach can be a decisive asset for the success of policies aimed at eradicating hunger and malnutrition. Firstly, the involvement of civil society and farmers' organizations in the design and implementation of these policies ensures that they are not driven by political expediency--meaning that once they set a course, governments will not divert from it simply because it appears to be the most practical solution at a given point in time. Of course, these framework laws could be further strengthened in this regard. Indeed, they generally provide neither recourse mechanisms--as they do not designate judicial, quasi-judicial or administrative bodies to which claims can be presented in case of violation of the right to food--nor the possibility of sanctioning non-compliance with the strategy adopted.

However, other benefits of framework laws are worthy of mention. The framework they establish ensures that resources are available to implement food security programmes, protecting the funds earmarked for the policy from changing political majorities and fostering security, which is conducive to private investment that contributes to national food security. In this regard, the framework law proposed by Malawi has already been mentioned. There are precedents for this type of recommendation: in Argentina, for instance, Law No. 25.724 establishing the National Programme for Food and Nutrition Security set up a Special Fund for the implementation of the programme. The Fund is financed through annual budget allocations from the national budget and contributions from external donors, and if available resources appear insufficient to achieve the programme objectives, the government may reallocate any additional funds needed. In Mali, the 2006 Law on Agricultural Policy created a National Fund for Agricultural Development, to ensure adequate financing of agricultural policies. Similar provisions for special funds have been included in Nicaragua's 2009 Law on Food and Nutritional Sovereignty and Security, although implementation measures are still to be adopted.

However important civil society participation and accountability may be, the Brazilian 'Zero Hunger' programme is much more than a set of institutional building blocks. It is above all a national strategy aimed at eradicating hunger and malnutrition, through which an array of sectoral policies converge towards that goal, and effective coordination is ensured among them. The adoption of such national strategies was recommended by the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - the body of experts set up to ensure compliance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - in General Comment (No. 12)

on the right to food, which was adopted in 1999. Similarly, when, after two years of negotiations in the FAO Committee on World Food Security, the Voluntary Guidelines in support of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in a context of national food security were adopted in 2004, Guideline 3 recommended that states should adopt ‘a national human-rights based strategy for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food [...] [which] could include objectives, targets, benchmarks and time frames; and actions to formulate policies, identify and mobilize resources, define institutional mechanisms, allocate responsibilities, coordinate the activities of different actors, and provide for monitoring mechanisms.’

These national strategies fulfil three key functions. Firstly, they identify the measures to be adopted, assigning responsibilities across different departments and setting deadlines. This reinforces accountability: any delay or failure to deliver will be imputable to specific bodies that will be called upon to justify the lack of implementation. In addition, defining clear and time-bound objectives facilitates monitoring by independent bodies, including courts, national human rights institutions or food and nutrition security councils. Such monitoring and evaluation of food security policies ensures permanent feedback and thus learning from experience, so that the policies are constantly improved in the light of successes and failures in their implementation.

Secondly, national strategies allow for a whole-of-government approach, in which various policies in the areas of health care, education, employment and social protection, agriculture and rural development are coordinated. This coordination promotes the identification of synergies among programmes that fall under the responsibility of different departments, such as school-feeding programmes that source from local small-scale producers or food-for-work programmes that improve rural infrastructure. This coordinating function is also important in states with a federal structure to improve alignment among policies pursued at different levels of government: in Mexico, one of the tasks of the Inter-Ministerial Commission for the Implementation of the Crusade against Hunger is to promote integrated agreements between entities at federal and municipal levels. Similarly, in an increasing number of states, food policy councils are being established at local level, on the initiative of municipalities or of citizens. These multiple-stakeholder councils have a key role to fulfil in democratizing food systems and identifying synergies among different policy sectors at local level: national-level strategies can support this by ensuring that local-level initiatives are strengthened, rather than undermined, by the different sectoral policies.

Thirdly, multi-year strategies make it possible to combine short-term approaches (that prioritize access to food for the hungry) and long-term concerns (removing the structural causes of hunger), and build bridges between them. This is particularly important in places where, as is often the case in low-income countries, years of underinvestment in agriculture have led to increased dependency on food imports and food aid, leading to a vicious cycle in which imports and aid discourage local production, which in

turn increases dependency, accentuating vulnerability in a context of higher and more volatile prices on international markets. Such countries must gradually reinvest in local production and social protection, but the transition from high dependency on food aid and imports must be managed over time: a multi-year strategy can facilitate the management of such a transition.

Providing a predictable framework is essential to attract investors and to allow the private sector to adapt to the consequences of the strategy. It is also important for public programmes to bridge the gap between short-term ad hoc approaches and long-term goals. Thus, the World Food Programme (WFP) has found that school-feeding programmes work best when they are part of multi-year strategies, with predictable and secured funding. This favours investment in the local food producers supplying the programme and in the skills required to implement it, including cooking skills that need to be mobilized in schools or community kitchens serving schools.

When Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva submitted his ‘Fome Zero’ (Zero Hunger) project strategy to the Citizenship Institute in October 2001, he underscored the need to continuously improve the strategy through citizen participation at all levels. His proposal, he wrote, ‘is intended to launch an ongoing process of debates, improvements and concrete actions for the country, in order to ensure the fundamental human right to adequate food for all. We are fully aware that the ‘Zero Hunger’ project can still be improved. To that end, a key point is identifying permanent mechanisms to involve civil society as a whole in a broad mobilization process for ensuring healthy food to all our citizens.’ Civil society participation was viewed neither as a luxury nor as a concession made to non-government organizations in order to gain their support; it was conceived as an indispensable ingredient that promotes an understanding of the barriers to be overcome, the identification of solutions, and the fulfilment of commitments. I am grateful to Oxfam for reminding us of the foundation for Brazil’s success, and how the country has been able to lead the way to full realization of the right to food.

Olivier De Schutter

UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food (2008-2014)

Fome Zero in Brazil: A source of inspiration for the successful implementation of 'Zero Hunger' in West Africa

'We are going to create the necessary conditions so that everyone in our country can eat three decent meals a day, every day, without having to rely on handouts from anyone. We must overcome hunger, destitution, and social exclusion. We have declared a war: a war, not to kill people, but to save lives.'

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of the Republic of Brazil, inauguration speech, 1 January 2003

Since it was launched a decade ago, Brazil's *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger) strategy has allowed 28 million people to break free from the cycle of hunger. These impressive figures, combined with numerous other gains, make a strong case for the idea that, when political will is combined with a plan that is coherent, consistent, multidimensional and participatory, public policy can have a truly significant impact in the fight against hunger. Zero Hunger is a genuine success in Brazil and a source of inspiration for many developing countries hoping to overcome hunger. Today, the Brazilian initiative extends beyond its borders. The United Nations launched the Zero Hunger challenge in June 2012, and various countries and regions around the world, including West Africa, are trying to apply the lessons learned from Brazil.

In this context, and in the framework of its plan to fast-track implementation of its common agricultural policy (ECOWAP), the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) has initiated a process, presented in its position paper on achieving **Zero Hunger in West Africa**, which was submitted to the Ministers of Agriculture and Food in the region in September 2012. The Ministers recognized *'...the opportunity of engaging the region on a local food and nutritional security initiative, called "Zero Hunger in West Africa"... The Ministers very favourably bought into this initiative with the hope that it would allow for developing renewed and more efficient approaches to ensuring food and nutritional security in the framework of NAIP and RAIP implementation, and in the long run, guarantee every citizen of the region's right to food. They therefore pledged to mobilize their heads of state and government with a view to ensuring top-level support and leadership for the initiative.'*

The West African initiative is more than justified by the food and nutrition situation, which remains a major concern and requires an ambitious response and bold reforms to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. The aim of this initiative is to coordinate, as in Brazil, the actions of governments, parliaments, civil society actors and producers' organizations around a single issue: eradicating hunger by 2020, and achieving significant progress by 2015.

It is obvious that West Africa has been directly inspired by the Brazilian success story. However, as ECOWAS and its partners prepare to launch their Zero Hunger initiative, questions remain as to the conditions required to make it a true success. Thus, beyond the declarations and framework papers

it seems legitimate to reflect on the practicalities and challenges in terms of social mobilization and the sub-region's capacities to carry such an ambitious initiative. While the Brazilian initiative enjoyed the full commitment of the highest authorities in the country, how can we ensure that West Africa will have the same political will in a region made up of several states? It is also important to re-examine the role that civil society can and must play, as in Brazil's Zero Hunger strategy, which was the result of initiatives by civil society organizations, presented in 2001 and adopted by the government two years later. Ultimately, this raises the central question of what governance and leadership mechanisms can guarantee an effective and inclusive policy that ensures the broadest possible participation.

Furthermore, while the West African initiative has been developed around fast-tracking the common agricultural policy, it is also important to think about how to build the cross-cutting and multi-sectoral dimension of an initiative that extends beyond strictly agricultural issues. How can it be connected to fundamental human rights issues (including women's rights) and in particular the right to food, which is an essential tool for the elimination of hunger and chronic vulnerability in the poorest populations? How can we make sure that the initiative serves as a catalyst to boost agricultural and industrial production, through links with other sector policies in the framework of an overall vision of the right to food? Finally, in the specifically West African context, it is vital to make sure that this initiative does not become another development programme designed by experts and/or envisioned by technical and financial partners (TFP) without real ownership by the political decision makers and people of the region.

'Effective Public Policies and Active Citizenship: Brazil's experience of building a Food and Nutrition Security System' looks back on the conditions that have made this policy a success in Brazil. It affords us an opportunity to examine the issues and especially the conditions for success so that West Africa can make the best possible use of the Brazilian experience to achieve Zero Hunger by identifying the key issues that the initiative needs to take into account and mainstream, if it is to achieve a similar measure of success. The aim of this introductory note, written by members of the GROW campaign, is to provide an analytical overview of some of the fundamental prerequisites identified in the report and examine them in the context of West African realities.

Two regions, one issue: easier access to food for rural and urban populations

Although the environments in Brazil and West Africa remain very different in a number of ways, the motivation for developing Zero Hunger initiatives on either side of the Atlantic rests on some similarities. When Zero Hunger was launched in Brazil in 2003, 44 million people, or 27.8 percent of the national population, suffered from hunger. When the Ministers of Agriculture of ECOWAS validated the Zero Hunger for West Africa initiative in September 2012, an average of 26.8 percent of the sub-Saharan African population was affected by undernourishment. West Africa was just getting over a food crisis which profoundly affected 18 million people in 2012.

Despite a slight drop--in relative terms--in undernourishment in sub-Saharan Africa, it is generally agreed that the region has become chronically subject to the new face of hunger and food crises. Since 2008, West Africa, and more specifically the Sahel region, has segued from crises of availability to crises of access; food is generally still available in the markets, but at such high prices that it is unaffordable for a great many families.

At the beginning of this century, Zero Hunger was designed in Brazil above all in response to a major problem of affordability of staple items affecting nearly one-third of the population; and not to deal with repeated food crises such as those experienced by West African populations. An emerging economic power and agricultural giant, Brazil in 2003 had no shortage of food, but the highly inegalitarian nature of Brazilian society meant that millions were deprived of regular access to adequate nutrition, in both urban and rural areas.

Family and peasant agriculture produced 70 percent of Brazil's food, and yet farmers, ranchers and rural women suffered from hunger. In West Africa, it is generally agreed that family agriculture covers more than 70 percent of food staple production. However, although 60 percent of the population makes its living from agriculture, which represents some 30 percent of the Gross Domestic Product, according to estimates, 80 percent of the people who suffer from hunger are farmers, herders, rural women and their families. Quite a paradox for the people who feed us!

While 70 percent of the food consumed by Brazilians comes from family farms, this production would certainly not be possible without the labour of women. Historically, women's contribution has had limited visibility and it differs greatly from the work of their male counterparts in a number of ways. In general, women producers ensure access to food for the family because they grow food in farms or gardens. The same applies in West Africa, where women working on family farms make a decisive contribution to food production, of up to 80 percent according to some estimates. The production of healthy food by these women has made it possible to step up the fight for food and nutritional security through diversified food production. However, their work receives little recognition and women suffer from a form of discrimination when they try to participate and take an active part in decision making in their families or communities.

Whether in terms of poverty reduction, access to land, the fight against hunger, or how to tackle gender disparities, significant similarities can be seen in the conditions for the emergence of these initiatives on both sides of the Atlantic. It is therefore important to gain a solid grasp of the success factors at work in Brazil, in order to identify the conditions for reproducing this initiative in the West African context.

A vision conveyed by a political leadership that is fully assumed and assertive

In Brazil, Zero Hunger was first and foremost led by one man, President Lula, and he fully assumed leadership around a consistent vision that remains strong. From the moment President Lula came to office, Zero Hunger was a political priority for him and for the highest authorities in the country. In his attempts to respond to the social and political demands of the very powerful social movement that brought him to the presidency of the country, Lula made large-scale experiment possible, as a result of outside initiatives. His political will remains the key to Zero Hunger's success. However, what is a striking lesson from this report is the fact that the vision went beyond mere political slogan to achieve expression in a major national policy that is coherent and consistent from conceptual, organizational and legal points of view.

The Zero Hunger strategy in Brazil was created as much in response to a specific context as to appease decades of social protest by forces for change towards which President Lula was deeply committed. The strategy was implemented in a difficult context (high debt, extremely high poverty, spiralling social inequalities, etc.) in the form of a new, innovative development model that went beyond the traditional approaches and doctrines of development institutions. This model combined the goals of reducing hunger and poverty with the coordination of Brazil's macroeconomic, social and production policies.

While the ECOWAP vision put forward by ECOWAS's Department of Agriculture reflects a broad consensus and is clearly defined in the founding text of the West African initiative, concerns may arise about the legal framework which integrates, and to a certain extent protects, the implementation of this policy. Indeed, there are questions as to the extent to which it is backed by the other departments of ECOWAS and by the highest political authorities in the region.

In the past few years, the processes underway in West Africa have allowed significant advances in relation to defining questions for food and agriculture. Through ECOWAP and through the different National Agricultural Investment Programmes, they have enabled the recognition of family-run farms as the foundation for agricultural development in West Africa, as well as the need for a more ambitious Common External Tariff. These tools and policies even acknowledge the necessity of using the concept of 'food sovereignty' as a means of envisioning the food and nutritional security of the populations of West African countries. However, despite a growing consensus, these processes still visibly suffer from limited implementation.

These difficulties are linked to the level of political support and commitment. In this respect there seems to be a lack of clarity, among ECOWAS member states on the political consensus reached and their involvement in terms of action and changes in response to development issues. They also illustrate the problems involved in providing a balanced response to

short-term social issues and to productive investment issues which have more long-term effects. The protracted delays which preceded the signing of the CET bear witness to the sometimes divergent priorities between states, and the sensitive trade-offs between Agriculture Ministers and other ministerial departments within the same country.

Similarly, 10 years after the commitments made by the heads of state and government in Maputo, the low mobilization of national budgets for the agricultural sector in general, and for family farms which are core to ECOWAP and NAIPs in particular, confirms how cumbersome the concretization of political consensus is in reality. This tension is even more marked for the livestock breeding sector, which makes a significant contribution to the economies of many countries of the sub-region and has been identified as a priority sector for the CAADP. Unfortunately, the sector receives only a tiny share of national budgets. Worse still, efforts deployed to attract commercial enterprises by promoting numerous Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) and making vast tracts of land available to them, thereby placing the food and agricultural future of the region in their hands, raises the question of the real importance given by decision makers to family farms.

A lack of political leadership is often put forward as an explanation for these constraints; but the imbalance between established consensuses and the practices or interests of the decision makers in charge of implementing them should not be overlooked. On this point, the West Africa GROW campaign has drawn on the Brazilian experience. In a country with very pronounced inequalities, similar tensions between family-run farms and agribusiness were experienced. One of the responses in Brazil was to set up two Agriculture Ministries, one for family farms and the other for agribusiness. Both, however, worked on the basis of a single agricultural policy. This response was accompanied by a mechanism for the redistribution of resources between the two models, which allowed family farms to really be taken into account in the Zero Hunger Initiative in Brazil. While it would be difficult to envisage similar mechanisms in West Africa, given the limited importance of agro-industries compared with family farms, redistribution across sectors (with the oil or mining sectors, for instance) could be envisaged. A debate is underway in Ghana on the priority sectors to benefit from oil revenue. One could imagine an allocation of financial resources proportional to the weight of the sector. This could certainly boost investment in the livestock breeding sector, beyond the efforts currently being made by the authorities.

If the aim of the Zero Hunger Initiative is to eradicate hunger by 2020 and obtain significant advances by 2015, it must be made a priority by the highest political authorities of the different ECOWAS states. The political commitment of the heads of state and governments, and of their respective parliaments, is yet to be expressed in practice by public policies that enshrine agriculture and food as national priorities, and which are supported by all their ministries, particularly those in charge of the economy and finance.

Similarly, 10 years after the commitments made by the heads of state and government in Maputo, the low mobilization of national budgets for the agricultural sector in general, and for family farms which are core to ECOWAP and NAIPs in particular, confirms how cumbersome the concretization of political consensus is in reality. This tension is even more marked for the livestock breeding sector, which makes a significant contribution to the economies of many countries of the sub-region and has been identified as a priority sector for the CAADP. Unfortunately, the sector receives only a tiny share of national budgets. Worse still, efforts deployed to attract commercial enterprises by promoting numerous Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) and making vast tracts of land available to them, thereby placing the food and agricultural future of the region in their hands, raises the question of the real importance given by decision makers to family farms.

A lack of political leadership is often put forward as an explanation for these constraints; but the imbalance between established consensuses and the practices or interests of the decision makers in charge of implementing them should not be overlooked. On this point, the West Africa GROW campaign has drawn on the Brazilian experience. In a country with very pronounced inequalities, similar tensions between family-run farms and agribusiness were experienced. One of the responses in Brazil was to set up two Agriculture Ministries, one for family farms and the other for agribusiness. Both, however, worked on the basis of a single agricultural policy. This response was accompanied by a mechanism for the redistribution of resources between the two models, which allowed family farms to really be taken into account in the Zero Hunger Initiative in Brazil. While it would be difficult to envisage similar mechanisms in West Africa, given the limited importance of agro-industries compared with family farms, redistribution across sectors (with the oil or mining sectors, for instance) could be envisaged. A debate is underway in Ghana on the priority sectors to benefit from oil revenue. One could imagine an allocation of financial resources proportional to the weight of the sector. This could certainly boost investment in the livestock breeding sector, beyond the efforts currently being made by the authorities.

If the aim of the Zero Hunger Initiative is to eradicate hunger by 2020 and obtain significant advances by 2015, it must be made a priority by the highest political authorities of the different ECOWAS states. The political commitment of the heads of state and governments, and of their respective parliaments, is yet to be expressed in practice by public policies that enshrine agriculture and food as national priorities, and which are supported by all their ministries, particularly those in charge of the economy and finance.

Multi-sector coordination within the framework of a legal corpus to meet the challenges of food security

Zero Hunger was not developed in Brazil without posing essential questions of governance: 49 programmes and government actions were coordinated around 19 ministries to simultaneously ensure (1) access to food, (2) the

reinforcement of family agriculture (3) income generation and (4) the promotion of partnerships and social mobilization. All this constitutes a real challenge in terms of programme coordination, management and monitoring.

The key was a political decision on the part of the federal government--followed by several state governments and numerous municipalities--to place hunger, food security and nutrition on the agenda at a supra-ministerial level, to create leverage in the fight against poverty and hardship. The Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger was set up with this aim. The ministry coordinates the action of all of the other ministries around the food and nutritional security policy.

Furthermore, to avoid political contingencies, Zero Hunger was endowed with a sturdy legal framework. Several laws were passed to anchor its fundamental principles and proper implementation. The Organic Law on Food and Nutritional Security (LOSAN) ensures the right to adequate food and lays the foundations of the National Food and Nutritional Security System (SISAN) to enforce this right. A law on Family Agriculture, which came into force in 2006, precisely defines the concept of family agriculture and determines the beneficiaries of the support programmes. The right to food was also added to the constitution in 2010, and was made a compulsory priority of the Brazilian state. These decisions were reinforced by those already existing in the Brazil's constitution which formalized the participation of civil society organizations in public policies.

From a legal standpoint in West Africa, few countries have enshrined the right to food in their constitutions. Only Côte d'Ivoire and Niger have given an independent constitutional foundation to this right. Mali and Senegal have opted to define framework laws on food and agriculture, but no French-speaking West African state has adopted a framework law explicitly recognizing the right to food. In addition, the legal framework and definition of family-run farms remain extremely vague and freely interpreted.

West Africa therefore faces a challenge of coordination, an issue which is raised all the more acutely by the current practices of the states, their technical and financial partners, and their socio-professional and non-government organizations. The success of this initiative cannot be achieved without a multi-sector approach, built on inclusive practices.

In this sense, governance issues will be crucial in West Africa, though it is clear that they will be framed in a different way. Implementing a Zero Hunger initiative in a region coordinated by a Commission, ECOWAS, and comprising 15 countries with different demographics (14 of them taken together make up only 75 percent of Brazil's total population) and with diverse, heterogeneous economies, requires much thought on an innovative mode of governance. It is also clear that the regional logic instigated by the project will require governance on the same scale, both in terms of the resources that can be mobilized and the implementing institutions.

Strong coordination with the states will be required to integrate national logics and dynamics, both of which are extremely important for the success of the initiative. Brazil had the advantage of following a single national logic, but given the limited capacity and heterogeneous nature of some of the West African states, a single model will undoubtedly not be possible.

However, in charging a specific ministry with coordination, and making it directly accountable to the highest level of government, the Brazilian model stressed three essential elements:

1. The objective of social development and the fight against hunger entails work on the multiple factors involved in food and nutritional issues. It obliges governments to act on agricultural and all other dimensions of food security. This requires a shift from the silo approach to the kind of coordination which is still all too rare in West Africa;
2. Political commitment at the highest level was essential, to ensure that all the ministries concerned were on board to provide planning, monitoring and evaluation for the initiative;
3. The implementation of an extremely precise legal framework has a 'protective' effect and prevents potential diversions in the implementation of these policies, whatever political vagaries may occur.

Financial autonomy to ensure the sustainability of the initiative

At a time when ECOWAS is launching its Zero Hunger initiative with the financial support of the German Cooperation agency (GIZ) and the technical support of the FAO, it is necessary to examine the importance of financial backing as a success factor. The \$2bn the Brazilian government invested in 2003 to launch Zero Hunger is four times the annual budget of the FAO. In this context, the US\$5,422,600 invested jointly by ECOWAS and GIZ seems relatively modest, in view of what is at stake in West Africa. Furthermore, unlike in Brazil, public development aid (PDA) remains a crucial component of West African economies and of the rural sector in particular, which is marked by a culture of partitioned, often competing projects, initiatives and programmes.

Of course, in recent years, the international community has committed to the Paris Declaration and the Accra Plan of Action to improve aid management. By boosting the implementation of its regional agricultural policy, one of the aims of ECOWAS was to concretize this road map through a new partnership with its member states, technical development partners, civil society, farmers' organizations and the private sector. Progress has been achieved, although the change of approach is turning out to be complex on the ground and progress is sometimes laborious. Despite the commitment of ECOWAS, the paradigm shift is long in coming. The multiplicity of initiatives and the diversity of approaches make aid management difficult and sometimes inefficient for the recipient countries.

In Brazil, there is conflicting information on the origin of the funds used. According to some sources, Brazil receives no international financial aid for the strategy's implementation, while others mention financial support from the World Bank and the FAO. It seems relatively clear that the private sector made only a marginal contribution, with less than one percent of funding. What is certain is that virtually all of the funds used in Brazil came from the state budget, on the basis of the redistribution of taxes that constitute the main resource for programmes. It should also be noted that the existing infrastructure facilitated the implementation of Zero Hunger. The presence of a state with organizational and planning skills was decisive. Finally, and this is surely the most important aspect, it took 10 years of continuous planning, evaluation and adaptation efforts with substantial and predictable resources to achieve this success.

If West Africa wishes to capitalize on Brazil's experience, it is important to keep several points in mind:

1. The setting up of a planning, monitoring and evaluation system for the initiative is essential in order to adapt and reformulate Zero Hunger to suit the context of the region. It will be all the more important to make sure it follows the principles chosen by ECOWAS in terms of governance of public policies and not only the demands and mechanisms of the technical and financial partners. In this sense, the issue of independent monitoring of progress and challenges is crucial. It should gradually involve a large number of players (states, PO, international organizations, civil society, NGOs, etc.).
2. The sustainability and predictability of funding for Zero Hunger in West Africa beyond the initial three years is essential for good planning and a real impact. It should be discussed, conceived and implemented. The absence of reflection and the failure to set up an internal mechanism to fund this initiative in the long term will reduce the sovereignty of ECOWAS over its direction and wipe out any hope of eradicating hunger in the region by 2020. But, above all, it is important to make sure the initiative goes beyond pilot projects and programmes to become a large-scale policy embedded in the fiscal policies and public budgets of the states.
3. Lastly, at a time when public-private partnerships are aggrandised, the Brazilian experience leads us to believe that the necessity for and the role played by private players in the success of this initiative were marginal and its success lies more in Brazil's capacity to implement solid financial and fiscal instruments which made it possible to anchor predictable and thus sustainable mechanisms.

A participatory process to redefine the concepts and principles underlying public policies

Finally, it would be incongruous and anachronistic to look at what is at stake for Zero Hunger in West Africa without examining the related issues of citizen participation. In Brazil, Zero Hunger introduced a paradigm shift in the conduct of public affairs. The country is known for its pioneering role in

the promotion and setting up of participatory budgets, and so it is only logical that Zero Hunger was built around the principle of participatory democracy, with the participation of civil society for the implementation of the strategy. This principle, written into the Constitution of 1988, is expressed through the validation of initiatives by civil society and by their involvement in all governance bodies.

In practical terms, the National Council for Food and Nutritional Security (CONSEA), an advisory body and an instrument of coordination between the government and civil society, comprises two-thirds of members from civil society and one-third from government ministries. The decisions of CONSEA and CAISAN (Inter-ministerial Chamber of Food and Nutritional Security) are based on the decisions of the National Food Security Conferences. These conferences take place every four years, involve thousands of people (civil society, private sector) and establish the broad thrust of policy.

In West Africa, the instrumental vision of participation in some countries and the lack of political will have not always allowed its effective realization in policies and at the level of the producer organizations. Time constraints and the need to achieve rapid results have often taken precedence over implementing an inclusive participatory process which, admittedly, represents a real challenge in terms of methodology, human resources, time and institutional know-how.

While it is true that exchange forums have opened up in West Africa over the past few years, it must be said that progress in terms of citizen participation varies from one country to another. On a regional scale, ECOWAP is the result of a long process of consultation with the professional organizations of West Africa and draws a good measure of its legitimacy from a consensus on the objectives of the policy and the means of its implementation. This example of participation could inspire the other departments and ECOWAS as a whole to renovate policy design and execution when Zero Hunger is launched.

Zero Hunger in Brazil was born of pilot experiences conducted by civil society organizations. From the design phase through implementation, monitoring and control of public policies, the role of civil society in Brazil has been essential and was built around the three principles of pressure, proposals and monitoring. While it is difficult to compare civil society in Brazil and West Africa, it is important to acknowledge the fact that the success of Zero Hunger in West Africa will depend on the space given to CSOs, and their ability to seize the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the current debate. ECOWAS' implementation of Zero Hunger will be influenced by:

- Maintaining and extending formal consultation spaces in West Africa by enshrining them in a legal and institutional framework that can include all of the players and meet the cross-sectoral challenges posed by food issues;

- Anchoring these frameworks in the principles and instruments of transparency and accountability which make it possible to monitor and exercise social control over public actions. Particular attention should be given to women, especially those working in rural areas, so that their greater vulnerability does not hinder their participation in development and public policy implementation;

- The responsibility of civil society and organized networks in West Africa, in all their diversity, to ensure quality social participation and follow in the footsteps of civil society in Brazil, which has been able to influence policies through innovative, functional programmes on the ground.

In conclusion

By 2030, the population West Africa has to feed will have doubled, to reach 455 million people. The majority of this population, i.e. 57 to 60 percent of West Africans, will be urban dwellers, compared with 14 percent in 1960. These two major demographic changes will increase demand for agricultural and livestock production by 60 to 70 percent.

In an extremely vulnerable region, where the number of under-nourished persons is still very high, the Zero Hunger initiative will allow ECOWAS to equip itself with the means to meet one of its biggest challenges: hunger. The aim is to coordinate the actions of the fight against hunger and for food and nutritional security around a common road map in order to increase their impact. This is an accessible and morally acceptable ambition: hunger is not inevitable and must be eradicated, since we have the means to do so.

The initiative launched by ECOWAS in West Africa meets real needs. But, beyond the words and concepts borrowed from Brazil, the West African context is profoundly different from a political, legal and institutional point of view. In this respect, for Zero Hunger in 2020, West Africa will have to overcome a number of challenges.

It is important above all to make the fight against hunger and structural, chronic malnutrition a **priority, central, long-term goal**. Zero Hunger in West Africa should create the impetus for concerted action that changes the policies, programmes and behaviours of the different actors. Its mission will be to federate and channel current and future initiatives for food security or even food sovereignty in the region.

Currently the 'Zero Hunger in West Africa' initiative is supported by the ECOWAS Department of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources. The department could constitute a focal point around which all players could rally to begin inclusive work on the multiple specificities of food and nutritional security. But this initial anchorage should be supported by true political **leadership** backed by strong coordination to deal with the multi-dimensional aspect of Zero Hunger.

This is why, in a context of institutional reform which allows for the creation of six new ECOWAS departments in 2014, to be added to the existing nine, it

seems clear that the Department of Agriculture on its own will not be able to tackle the complex and entangled issues involved in an inclusive strategy for food and nutritional security in West Africa. Whether at national or regional level, the challenge will therefore be to switch from the current backing to a **multiple-sector** backing that combines the other departments and policies under construction and coordinates the various food and nutritional security initiatives.

One of the keys to the success of Zero Hunger in West Africa, as shown by the example of Brazil, will be the commitment of all players in the region, throughout the design, implementation and evaluation stages. Hence the need to continue and fast-track the renovation and adaptation of the modes of governance to guarantee the role and involvement of civil society organizations, and the status afforded women, who are indispensable actors in the right to food. Beyond social participation, the West African initiative should organize the essential contribution of the national and regional parliaments in order to endow all components of this strategy with the legal arsenal necessary for it to succeed.

Lastly, in a region that is highly dependent on aid, a change in approach and in culture will be essential. It would be difficult to try to achieve Zero Hunger while relying on external aid. Making Zero Hunger a public budget priority on the scale of the countries and region will be a decisive factor in its success.

For the West African civil society organizations that are members of the GROW campaign, the analysis of the Brazilian experience outlined in the report should make it possible to identify and agree on the necessary conditions for the success of the Zero Hunger initiative in West Africa. It constitutes a significant contribution to the spaces for inclusive dialogue that the implementation of this initiative requires. The ambition of the members of GROW is thus to share their analysis, like all of the players who will commit to the Zero Hunger strategy for our region, to build strong public policies that will take into account the needs of the most vulnerable groups of the population in order to eradicate hunger in West Africa.

The members of the GROW campaign in West Africa
Abuja, Accra, Cotonou, Dakar, Lomé, Niamey, Ouagadougou,
January 2014

Notes

¹ http://www.inter-reseaux.org/IMG/pdf/Faim_Zero_EN.pdf (consulted on 3/02/2014)

² http://www.inter-reseaux.org/IMG/pdf/Rapport_final_Com-te_ministeriel_CEDEAO_Abidjan_Sept_2012_EN.pdf

³ *FAO, The State of Food Insecurity in the World, Economic growth is necessary but not sufficient to accelerate reduction of hunger and malnutrition, 2012, pp. 8 and 9.*

⁴ http://www.inter-reseaux.org/IMG/pdf/Note_FaimZero_Sept2012.pdf (in French)

⁵ *Excerpt from the presentation of the initiative by the ECOWAS Director of Agriculture, Alain Traoré, in March 2013.*

MEMBERS OF THE GROW CAMPAIGN IN WEST AFRICA

APESS

Association for the promotion of livestock in the Sahel and savannah brings together breeders from 9 West African countries and three countries of Central Africa, including Chad. APASS works in the framework of modernizing family farms that enables farmers to better ensure food security for their families and increase their income. APASS was founded in 1989 in Burkina Faso and its action currently affects over 75,000 families. In 2010, APASS conducted a study in Chad, Nigeria and Cameroon on the strategy developed by the agro-pastoralists to cover the food needs of their families. It showed that the integration of livestock-agriculture ensures better food security. www.apessafrique.org

Billital Maroobe Network

The Bilital Maroobe Network (RBM) is composed of associations of pastors and breeders from seven West African countries. Its role is to monitor the situation of pastors in the area affected by the crisis. In 2010, the network had conducted a study which highlighted the failures of public policies and partners to provide appropriate responses with specific strategies for pastoralist communities. In October 2011, the RBM called on governments and development partners of an impending food and pastoral crisis in the Sahel. www.maroobe.org

IPAR

Founded in 2004 and receiving its official recognition in 2008, the prospective agricultural and rural initiative (IPAR) is a Think Tank. It is also a space for reflection, dialogue and proposals for concerted agricultural and rural policies in Senegal and the West African region. The missions of IPAR revolve around three main areas: research, capacity building and facilitating spaces for discussion and debate. The main activities are focused on current agricultural issues: (i) demographics, employment and migration, (ii) public policies, (iii) the performance and productivity of family farms, (iv) land and natural resource management, (v) strategic watch and foresight. www.ipar.sn

Oxfam

Oxfam is an international confederation of 17 organizations working together in 92 countries to find lasting solutions to poverty and injustice. Oxfam is present and active in all of the most affected countries in the region and has also launched new programs focused on food security, livelihoods, access to safe drinking water as well as good hygiene practices to meet the immediate needs and build resilience. In 2012, Oxfam has an objective to reach more than 1.2 million people through its humanitarian assistance programs. www.oxfam.org/en

POSCAO

The platform of civil society organizations in West Africa on the Cotonou Agreement (POSCAO) is a network of CSOs created following the renegotiation of the Lomé IV and Cotonou agreements to monitor the EU-ACP cooperation. It consists of a dozen platforms and national coalitions that are its focal points in the West African countries. The network specializes on topics related to trade policy and negotiations, the intra-regional trade in West Africa, monitoring of the coherence between the regional development policies, the community development program, etc. It is coordinated by ENDA CACID. www.endacacid.org

WILDAF

Women in Law and Development in Africa¹ / Femmes, Droit et Développement en Afrique (WiLDAF / FeDDAF) - West Africa is part of an extensive pan-African non-governmental organizations for women's and individual rights founded in 1990, its headquarters being in Harare, Zimbabwe. It is dedicated to promoting and strengthening strategies which link the right to development in order to increase the participation and influence of women at all levels for the emergence of a culture of respect and exercise of women's rights in Africa. www.wildaf-ao.org

GROW

FOOD LIFE PLANET

