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Peasants, Smallholders and Post-Global Food Crisis Agriculture Investment Programs

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This article examines new multilateral food and agriculture development programs implemented in response to the 2008 Global Food Crisis. These programs, which seek to increase agricultural investment and production in developing countries, have gained wide currency among donors, recipient governments and multilateral organizations. Given the significant financial and political resources committed to their success, these new multilateral food and agriculture programs point to a new global food security policy consensus. By examining two of the key World Bank and EU programs prioritizing the integration of small-scale and peasant farmers into commodity chains, we argue that they fail to adequately address the obstacles poor farmers themselves have identified as critical to improving their food security and livelihoods.

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Peasants, Smallholders and Post-Global Food Crisis Agriculture Investment Programs

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Abstract

This article examines new multilateral food and agriculture development programs implemented in response to the 2008 Global Food Crisis. These programs, which seek to increase agricultural investment and production in developing countries, have gained wide currency among donors, recipient governments and multilateral organizations. Given the significant financial and political resources committed to their success, these new multilateral food and agriculture programs point to a new global food security policy consensus. By examining two of the key World Bank and EU programs prioritizing the integration of small-scale and peasant farmers into commodity chains, we argue that they fail to adequately address the obstacles poor farmers themselves have identified as critical to improving their food security and livelihoods.

Keywords

Food crisis, food security, agricultural investment, peasants, EU, World Bank.

Paysans, petits producteurs et les programmes d'investissement agricole après la crise alimentaire globale de 2007-08

Résumé

Cet article examine les nouveaux programmes multilatéraux de développement mis en œuvre en réponse à la crise alimentaire mondiale de 2008. Ces programmes, qui visent à accroître les investissements et la production agricole dans les pays en développement, ont emporté l'adhésion des donateurs, des gouvernements bénéficiaires et des organisations multilatérales. Compte tenu des ressources financières et politiques importantes mises en œuvre, ces programmes alimentaires et agricoles indiquent l'émergence d'un nouveau consensus politique sur la sécurité alimentaire mondiale. En examinant deux des principaux programmes de la Banque mondiale et de l'UE donnant la priorité à l'intégration des petits agriculteurs et des paysans dans les chaînes alimentaires, nous défendons l'idée que ces programmes ne constituent pas une réponse adéquate aux obstacles identifiés par les petits agriculteurs eux-mêmes pour améliorer leur sécurité alimentaire et moyens de subsistance.

Mots-clefs

crise alimentaire, sécurité alimentaire, investissement agricole, paysans, UE, Banque mondiale.

Sommaire

Introduction **5**

From the Global Food Crisis to a Crisis of Production **5**

Smallholders : Not Just Any Old Productivity Boosts Will Do **6**

New Multilateral Agriculture Investment Programs **9**

European Union Food Facility (EUFF) 9

The Global Agricultural and Food Security Program (GAFSP) 11

The Many Shortcomings of Investment Programs **12**

Policy and Political Implications: Initial Observations **13**

The Transnational Peasant Response **14**

Conclusion **15**

References **16**

Introduction

The 2007-2008 Global Food Crisis (GFC) rekindled interest and concern about agriculture and food security issues among a wide sector of scholars, policy-makers, practitioners and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The crisis was a watershed moment illustrating the fragility of the global food system and demonstrating how even a relatively brief episode of market volatility could swiftly unravel decades of development gains. Much has been written about the GFC and its aftermath in recent years, in particular with regards to the end of cheap food, persistent high levels of world food insecurity, reform of global food security governance, the financialization of food, land grabbing, and the deepening linkages between climate change and food insecurity.

Like many scholars and observers, we do not see the GFC as a singular event in time but instead as one manifestation of prolonged global food insecurity and agrarian crises. In the global agri-food system, food prices are a particularly potent signal of systematic crises. In particular, volatile and fluctuating food prices, however measured, make the wider food insecurity/agrarian crises visible and legible to the state and other actors. That being said, it has now been nearly six years since the GFC became part and parcel of global development debates. This calls for a sober assessment of the developments that have taken place during this period. This paper is a first cut at an assessment and we revisit multilateral food and agriculture investment programs that were implemented as so-called responses to the GFC.

These programs deserve particular attention. First, such programs became the "flagship" response by donor states to the crisis ; these are the most visible global development response. Second, donor states appear to have largely fulfilled their commitments of material support for these programs. It is not simply that donors paid up ; such "kept promises" are striking given that most other commitments donors made, especially with regard to regulation and governance to address the GFC, have not materialized (indeed, most have been forgotten already). Third, such programs represent a massive financial contribution by donors. This appears a departure from the often noted historical decline of official development assistance (ODA) to agricultural and food security, although it is not clear if donors will continue to support these multilateral food and agriculture development programs over the long-term. Fourth, these programs have gained wide currency among development practitioners, scholars, and, most importantly, donor and recipient governments as a new model for agricultural development. This in fact may have profound importance given the "stickiness" of paradigms in global development policy. To the extent that these programs have forged, and articulate, an ideational and political consensus among donors and recipients, this consensus is likely to have long-term influence on food and agriculture policy going forward at the national, bilateral and multilateral level. In other words, it would not be unsurprising if global development policies on agriculture and food security increasingly are to be made in the image of such programs.

In this paper we examine two of these flagship multilateral food and agriculture development programs : the European Union's Food Facility and the G8-sponsored Global Agriculture Food Security Program. We argue that these programs have been instrumental in institutionalizing an emergent global development paradigm that seeks to transform small-scale and peasant farmers into agricultural entrepreneurs. We further suggest that these programs do not adequately address the obstacles poor farmers themselves have identified as critical to improving their food security and livelihoods. This paints a picture of a post-GFC development agenda driven by the logic of agriculture modernization and marketization but that fails to address many of the underlying structural constraints peasants face in order to improve their livelihoods and food security.

From the Global Food Crisis to a Crisis of Production

Support for multilateral food and agriculture investment programs would have not have been possible without constructing the idea that the GFC was a crisis of production. For many observers, the 2008 global food crisis represented the nadir of the agro-industrial model and provided a rare opportunity for reforming the world food system. There is a massive literature about the causes and consequences of the GFC that we will not repeat here. They key point is that despite a high degree of debate about the underlying

causes and drivers, nearly all analysts regardless of ideological and disciplinary persuasion, understood the crisis as the interplay of multiple, complex and multidimensional factors[1]. Indeed, the complexity underlying the GFC was deeply integrated into the official discourse[2] and the proposals put forward by governments, international organizations and global civil society to address the crisis. For example, a proposal by Japan to establish a global food reserve to tackle market speculation and price volatility, the G8's strong statement against export bans, a UN-based initiative to gain political support for an international agreement, and a civil society declaration urging for the right to food to serve as a basis for the national and international response to the GFC capture the complexity. Another confirmation of the acceptance of complexity and multidimensionality is the fact that even to debate the policy response to the crisis, institutions at all levels have established multi-perspective units to devise food security solutions[3].

The early acceptance of the complexity and multidimensionality of the GFC, which suggested that equally complex and multidimensional solutions would be required, appears to have given way to a singular development policy narrative : a crisis of production. Indeed it is remarkable how rapidly this ideational shift has taken place and the extent to which it now dominates the policy debate about global food security (McMichael and Schneider, 2011). Whereas in the early days of the crisis policy debates about financial speculation or global food reserves appeared to have attracted significant interest and support among a wide constellation of governments, international organizations, and global civil society, much of these efforts have slowly fallen of the regulatory/governance agenda. Our point is not that these issues have been dropped because of exhaustive debate. Indeed, many of these policy issues have disappeared from the agenda often without significant and substantive discussions at the international level (Wise & Murphy, 2013). In sharp contrast, the post-crisis official policy appears to have developed a singular focus on boosting agriculture production as the most appropriate (and only) way to address the challenge of feeding a growing world population (hence the so-called "9 billion people in 2050" problem that now dominates public discourse). Declining agricultural productivity in basic food crops in developing countries has long been a concern in development policy circles, however, in recent years, projects such as the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the Alliance Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and more recently the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition have exemplified the renewed focus on raising farm productivity in developing countries. As a result, the dominant post-crisis response has been to muster resources for increasing agricultural production as its primary objective. This is evidenced in the massive inflow of financial resources towards the provision of agricultural inputs, technology, and related infrastructure, for which international assistance amounted to 13.5 billion $US in 2008-2009 alone (G8, 2009).

Smallholders : Not Just Any Old Productivity Boosts Will Do

The crisis of production, (mainstream) global development thinkers tell us, is not occurring at all scales. The so-called crisis of production, its proponents argue, is in fact most acute among small-scale farmers in developing and least-developing countries. While we accept this may be factually correct[4], it is equally important to contextualize how the crisis of production facilitates a reframing of the official discourse about the role of small-scale agricultural producers in world agriculture.

1. For the most part, conventional analyses of the global food crises have emphasized longer-term factors such as declining investment in agriculture, the shift towards export-oriented versus domestic food production, unfair terms of international trade for developing countries, and short-term factors such as the link between energy prices and demand for biofuels, financial speculation on commodity markets, export restrictions, and historically low levels of reserves stocks in exacerbating price and market volatility (Heady & Fan, 2008 ; Mittal, 2009 ; Margulis, 2009).

2. Consider biofuels which form a new food-feed-fuel complex that exacerbates the global hunger challenge (Banerjee, 2011

3. Institutions range from universities, the state, the G8 to the UN system have all created multi-perspective networks ; for example, academic initiatives involve multidisciplinary that involve soil scientists to social anthropologists, the G8 has developed teams of development, agriculture and finance officials co-developing policy. Even the UN system has moved to an inter-agency approach.

4. It is worth mentioning that there is debate about the reliability of the data. Whether under-productivity may well be the result of "rational" decisions by farmers facing multiple risks is also less clear cut.

Part of this new official discourse does seek to valorize small-scale farmers. "Small-scale" farmers are still the vast majority of the world's farmers. There are an estimated 500 million small farms in developing countries (IFAD, 2009) supporting approximately over two billion people (Hazel *et al*, 2007 : Birner & Resnick, 2005). Although the term "small-scale" or smallholder farmers is not a technical definition, general characteristics include : farm sizes of two hectares or less ; the prevalence of female-headed households ; limited access to credit, inputs, information, and extension services ; net-food buyers ; and, house-hold income is less than two US$ a day. The precariousness of small-scale farming is significant and well-known ; smallholder farmers account for at least half of the world's hungry (FAO, 2009a). As such, small-scale farmers represent a significant global constituency critical to world food security, employment, sustainable development, and poverty-reduction efforts.

In the series of policy debates, reports and plans designed to resolve the GFC, the extremely diverse and heterogonous group of small-scale farmers has been transformed into the homogenizing category of 'smallholder farmers'. An early articulation of the set of development policy interventions to be targeted at smallholder farmers appeared in the World Bank's 2008 *World Development* Report (WDR). Although released in late 2007 and prior to the peak of the GFC, the WDR has been highly influential in shaping the post-GFC response (McMichael, 2009 ; Akram-Lodhi, 2008). The report posited a very different characterization of smallholder farmers compared, for example, to the pro-agroecology vision of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science, and Technology for Development (IAASTD). The WDR emphasized the need to increase the economic competitiveness of smallholder farms. According to the World Bank, institutional reforms such as secure land tenure, the development of markets to manage risk and inputs, and the wide-scale incorporation of modern agricultural biotechnology will enable smallholder farmers to be successful market actors (World Bank, 2008). Targeting global development policy towards smallholder farmers is embedded in a persuasive logic ; supply-driven interventions directed at increasing the participation of smallholders in markets will yield maximum food security benefits, given that much of this population already live in extreme poverty (Vanhaute, 2011).

Echoes of the Bank's recommendations are found in the *Comprehensive Framework for Action* (CFA) produced by the UN's High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. This latter document reflected the consensus view of the UN system and Bretton Woods institutions on agriculture policy, although it also incorporated some elements of the IAASTD (Clapp, 2008). The CFA outlined major policy interventions for smallholder farmers to boost and sustain increased production and enabling market-led development (UN, 2008). Similar to the WDR, a baseline assumption of the CFA is that the lack of basic resources, market-based incentives and well functioning institutions are the fundamental constraints preventing smallholder farmers from fulfilling their potential as economic agents (UN, 2008 : 19).

This approach to smallholders has become the new policy status quo and has been mainstreamed into the global discourse on agriculture. Prime examples of this are the G8 *L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security* (G8, 2009), the G8/G20 Pittsburgh Summit *Leaders' Statement* (http://www.pittsburghsummit.gov/mediacenter/129639.htm, accessed 28 November 2009), and the *Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security* (FAO, 2009b). There is tectonic shift in global development policy with small-scale farmers emerging as a problem requiring fixing. Small-scale farmers, it appears, are not sufficiently integrated into the global food system. The task global development officials have set for themselves is reinvesting in agriculture in order to make the global food system better serve smallholders and for smallholders to better serve the global food system.

By no means do we argue that in principle, investment in agriculture and market development focused on smallholder farms are misguided policies. In fact, we like many others are encouraged by the renewed commitment to investment in agriculture. If such investments are targeted at the most marginal farmers and involve them in the very design and implementation of programs, if they are accompanied with sufficient safety-nets, social and physical infrastructure, and meaningful regulation of the agriculture sectors and labour markets to ensure producers and workers receive prices that allow them to live in dignity, the new

emphasis on agriculture investment could have profound positive impacts on food security in particular and on poverty more generally. However, we remain cautious and recognize that there are many obstacles facing the design and implementation of such a broad policy package. We now turn our attention to certain elements of the post-GFC agenda that display considerable momentum but have not yet been examined.

In the series of policy debates, reports and plans designed to resolve the GFC, the extremely diverse and heterogonous group of small-scale farmers has been transformed into the homogenizing category of 'smallholder farmers'. An early articulation of the set of development policy interventions to be targeted at smallholder farmers appeared in the World Bank's 2008 World Development Report (WDR). Although released in late 2007 and prior to the peak of the GFC, the WDR has been highly influential in shaping the post-GFC response (McMichael, 2009 ; Akram-Lodhi, 2008). The report posited a very different characterization of smallholder farmers compared, for example, to the pro-agroecology vision of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science, and Technology for Development (IAASTD). The WDR emphasized the need to increase the economic competitiveness of smallholder farms. According to the World Bank, institutional reforms such as secure land tenure, the development of markets to manage risk and inputs, and the wide-scale incorporation of modern agricultural biotechnology will enable smallholder farmers to be successful market actors (World Bank, 2008). Targeting global development policy towards smallholder farmers is embedded in a persuasive logic ; supply-driven interventions directed at increasing the participation of smallholders in markets will yield maximum food security benefits, given that much of this population already live in extreme poverty (Vanhaute, 2011).

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New Multilateral Agriculture Investment Programs

Several major multilateral and regional agriculture investment programs were launched in response to the GFC. Two multilateral programs promoting investment in agriculture are analyzed here : the European Union Food Facility (EUFF) and the World Bank's Global Agricultural and Food Security Program (GAFSP). In our view, these financing mechanisms have benefited from significant institutional and political support (as well as considerable financial commitments), and have significantly shaped post-GFC global and national policy and programming.

European Union Food Facility (EUFF)

The EU was one the earliest donors to put into place a new funding mechanism to address the GFC. By late 2008 the EU had legislated a Food Facility (EUFF) providing one billion Euros (1.45 billion US$) of development funding over a three year period.

The facility sought to bridge the gap between emergency aid and medium to long-term development aid to agriculture. Its main objective was to support smallholder farming by expanding access to agricultural inputs and services such as fertilizers and seeds, microcredit, investment, equipment, infrastructure and storage. It also included safety-net measures to help meet basic food needs. Following a dialogue that took place between the European Parliament and civil society organizations (and in particular with farmers' organizations) in October 2008, a third objective was added (beyond boosting production and the provision of safety nets) i.e. supporting the sustainability of the interventions and their impact on the governance of agricultural sector. The program was not universal : to reinforce its impact, it gave priority to a delimited group of 50 countries, 30 of which in Africa (European Commission, 2009).

The EUFF was designed to be a mechanism to rapidly scale-up existing programs with trusted implementing partners. The original proposal of the Commission limited funding to International Organizations only, namely FAO, World Bank, IFAD and WFP. The rationale was that this would greatly facilitate both implementation and monitoring. Yet, the Parliament requested that a larger number of potential beneficiaries be considered and, as a result, the EUFF earmarked about one-fifth of outlays to non-state actors. A direct implication of this was that the type of expenses to be considered under the EUFF was broadened to include tools such as budget support, direct funding of projects and programmes, and a call for proposals.

Following the adoption of Regulation (EC) No 1337/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a facility for rapid response to soaring food prices in developing countries, a first set of projects was adopted in March 2009 for a total value of €313.9 million, covering 23 developing countries, 14 of them in Africa. In April 2009, a second set of projects was adopted for a total of €393.8 million, including a €200 million call for proposals open to non-state actors, the private sector and aid agencies of EU Member States. In December 2009, a third set of projects was adopted for a total value of €129.7 million, including budget support measures. By the end of 2009, €456 million – nearly half the Food Facility budget – had already been paid out. In April 2010, a last set of projects was adopted for a total value of €145.3 million, including regional projects and budget support. All contracts were completed by 31 December 2011. As of 30 April 2010, €627 million (64%) had been channelled through international and regional organizations, €218 million (22%) through the call for proposals, and €136,5 million (14%) through budget support (European Commission, 2010).

The EUFF is widely seen as a success (see Roosebreok et al., 2012 ; FAO 2014). On 17 June 2013, the European Union received the first ever Jacques Diouf award from the FAO, in recognition of its pioneering work on the EU Food Facility. José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, accepted the award on behalf of the EU. In a press release launched on the occasion, the European Commission claimed to have provided indirect support to 93 million people, led to the vaccination of over 44.6 million livestock, and helped to train 1.5 million people in agricultural production, while also boosting sustainable agricultural production from small-scale farmers, reducing post-harvest losses and facilitating access to markets. Beneficiaries apparently saw a 50% increase in agricultural production and

a rise in the household annual income of on average €290[5].

A recent external evaluation of the EUFF (Roosebroek et al., 2012) for the EuropeAid Cooperation Office presents the EUFF as an innovative and rapid response by the EU to the GFC (the design and roll-out of the EUFF took less than 10 months), which reflects the prioritization of agriculture and food security in the EU aid system. The evaluation points out that the EUFF – which supported 232 projects in 49 countries – was largely successful in the majority of interventions to promote supply-side responses and increase smallholder productivity : "Project reports indicate that production capacity (at local level) and sector governance were increased through targeted actions in 50% of the projects. Strengthened (or new) farmers organisations are better able to manage the use of shared facilities, gain access to markets and claim their rights with local authorities." (Roosebroek et. al.. 2012 : 60).

According to Oxfam, which implemented several EUFF funded programs in Nepal, Pakistan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Mali, the programs demonstrate the enormous potential among smallholder farmers, provided that "farmers themselves are leaders of the process". In an 2012 evaluation report, the NGO confirms the overall assessment that the EUFF was a success, while recognizing that building multi-faceted programmes, involving numerous organizations across a whole spectrum of society, proved to be a challenge in many cases, which could be overcome only where Oxfam had a strong, long-term presence and had strategic partnerships with local bodies (Oxfam GB, 2012).

The FAO, which was the EUFF largest implementation partner (with 36,46% of total EUFF resources as of 30 April 2010), also recognizes that a number of improvements would be required to ensure that the programs have a sustainable impact. In its 2011 evaluation report, the FAO mentions the importance of adopting a systems-based approach, and of expanding the focus of programmes beyond inputs, to include methods of food production (through farmer field schools for example). More attention should be paid to improving food utilization, in particular by women. The report also insists on reinforcing ties with local and national stakeholders, and of institutionalizing the programs. Finally, it recognizes the importance of putting in place supportive agricultural, trade, financial and aid policies (FAO, 2011).

More critical, a civil society network with strong connections to African peasant movements has criticized the EUFF for its short-term focus (perceived as inappropriate because strengthening productive capacities often requires medium-term support), for being too rigid with time limits (for example programmes in West-Africa finishing mid-2011 when planting season is at its peak), and for failing to address price volatility and the structural causes of hunger. The network also regrets the lack of an incentive for the involvement of smallholder/family farmers' organizations, and for ensuring a multi-stakeholder assessment of projects (although there were some exceptions) (CSO Monitoring, 2009-2010).

The EUFF 2012 final external evaluation report acknowledges that many of the achievements remain fragile, and that the 2-year time span of many of the medium-term projects was too short to guarantee lasting results (Roosebroek et al., 2012). To be able to consolidate on the progresses made, it is crucial to continue to support the beneficiaries. Several recommendations have been made to institutionalize the EUFF programme into a "standby fund " (Roosebroek et al. 2012), mainstream key program elements into the EU's general aid programme, and to "maintain the momentum of the EUFF" (FAO, 2011 : 24) by having the EU commit to long-term funding of the EUFF or designing a new yet similar programme.

Following the GFC, the EU endorsed a *Common policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges*, which explicitly puts food security and sustainable agriculture at the top of EU development priorities, and targets smallholder farmers and vulnerable communities as societal groups that yield the best returns in terms of poverty reduction and agricultural growth : "this new EU framework therefore concentrates on enhancing incomes of smallholder farmers and the resilience of vulnerable communities, supporting the resolve of countries that prioritise agriculture and food security in their development efforts" (European Commission, 2010). The policy framework has been well received for it attempts to tackle food insecurity

5. Source : http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-541_en.htm

in a comprehensive manner, grounded in the right to food framework and in country-owned and country-specific food security strategies. It also insists on the role of the Committee of World Food Security (CFS) as the pivotal institution, which should coordinate global food security initiatives. For these reasons, it was strongly endorsed by the European NGO Platform CONCORD[6].

In May 2013, European Development Ministers at the Foreign Affairs Council adopted a long awaited *EU Food and Nutrition Security Implementation Plan*, entitled 'Boosting food and nutrition security through EU action : implementing our commitments'. The Implementation Plan (IP), which is to be operationalized in the period of 2014-2020, is part of the EU's long-term policy response to the GFC. It seeks to integrate the 2010 food security framework with the various other frameworks developed in the aftermath of the GFC, on resilience (COM(2012)586), social protection (COM(2012)446) and nutrition (COM(2013)141). The IP is centered around six policy priorities : smallholder farming, effective governance, regional approaches, social protection mechanisms, nutrition interventions and resilience building. Policy priority 1 is to "improve smallholder resilience and rural livelihoods" (European Commission, 2013), which confirms that the GFC smallholder narrative has had a major impact on EU policy-making.

The Global Agricultural and Food Security Program (GAFSP)

In late 2009 the Group of Twenty (G20) committed 22 billion US$ for agriculture and selected the Bank to design and coordinate a new multilateral trust fund to scale-up long-term and structural agricultural and food security assistance[7]. This included support for a new fund, the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP). The program's central objective was to increase public and private sector investment in the agriculture and rural sectors. It set out five priority areas for funding : raising agricultural productivity ; linking farmers to markets and value addition ; reducing risk and vulnerability (especially that stemming from increased exposure to markets) ; facilitating non-farm rural livelihoods ; increased public and private capacity.

The GAFSP explicitly recognized that smallholder farmers compose the bulk of the rural poor and food insecure and require specific programmatic focus. Yet upon closer inspection, most of the interventions aimed at smallholders mimic the recommendations of the WDR in that they prioritize the development of domestic market institutions in order to initiate the modernization of agriculture (WB, 2009). Decisions related to the disbursement of funds under the GAFSP are taken by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Bank's private sector arm, with limited input from the UN. The criteria include national comprehensive agriculture and food security strategies and investment plans, a favourable 'investment climate', and commitment to increasing public sector spending on agriculture. Funds are distributed to states and to regional organizations, development banks and UN agencies on a project-by-project basis. The GAFSP program is not universal as only countries that are members of the Bank's International Development Association (IDA) are eligible to receive financing (WB, 2009 : 26). The GAFSP operates in a similar fashion to the EUFF. Funding is provided on a call for proposals basis. Unlike the EUFF, there is no pre-selected countries and private firms and CSOs are eligible to apply. It is similar in financial size to the EUFF with a collective commitment well over $US 1 billion.

One of the program's novel and controversial features is a separate private-sector funding window. This window provides loans, credit guarantees and equity to firms and financial institutions related to 'investment in agriculture', which includes not just input and service providers, but also infrastructure projects and all categories of agribusiness. Eligible firms can be of national or foreign origin, as long as they meet the requirement of 'doing business' in an eligible country, are profitable, and can service the loans (WB, 2009 : 31). The private-sector window is solely administered by the IFC. There is no reference to the relative size of, or cap on, the private sector funding window.

Initially it was unclear whether the GAFSP would get off the ground. In 2009, G8 members and other donors (e.g., Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) pledged $US 925 million to

6. Source : http://www.concordeurope.org/208-concord-position-on-the-eu-food-security-policy-framework-implementation-plan

7. Source : http://www.concordeurope.org/208-concord-position-on-the-eu-food-security-policy-framework-implementation-plan

the GAFSP. In 2010, only $US 367 million of pledges were delivered and a total of $224 million was earmarked for projects in Bangladesh, Haiti, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Togo (GAFSP 2010). The picture looked marginally different in 2011 with donors delivering a total of $US 562 million of their pledges, about half of the 2009 commitments (GAFSP 2012). The picture was very different by the end of 2012 with donors' contributions reaching $US 1.35 billion (this is broken down by donor and window in Table 1). The sharp growth in contributions is in response to a "donations drive" by the US at the 2012 G8 summit where it announced that it would match $1 to the GAFSP for every $2 contributed by other donors (GAFSP, 2013).

Table 1 : Donor Contributions as of December 31, 2012 (USD million equivalents)

Contributors	Total Pledged and Committed	Receipts
Public Sector Window		
Australia	92.6	75.4
Canada	204.8	177.1
Gates Foundation	60.0	60.0
Ireland	0.6	0.6
Korea	50.0	28.8
Spain	93.4	94.2
United Kingdom	20.1	20.1
United States	450.0	301.4
Sub-total	**971.6**	**757.6**
Private Sector Window		
Canada	51.50	51.5
Japan	30	—
Netherlands	142.9	76.3
United Kingdom	59.3	—
United States	25.0	25.0
Sub-total	**308.7**	**152.9**
Unallocated		
Korea	30.0	
United Kingdom	38.5	—
Sub-total	**68.5**	
Total	**1,348.8**	**910.5**

Source: GAFSP (2013)

At present the GAFSP has allocated $658 million from the public window to 18 countries, however, only $51 million has translated into projects on the ground to date (GAFSP, 2013). Several reasons have been put forward for this, among which the delay in donor contributions, the lengthy process between announcing available funding, the call for proposals, approval of projects and implementation on the ground, and so on. Whereas there is over $US 300 available from the private sector window only $US 3.3 million has been distributed to this day. To date only 3 projects have been approved with $25 million earmarked. The private sector window was most strongly supported by the US, Canada and the Netherlands to promote public-private partnerships (see Table 1). Yet the trend seems to suggest that firms are not actively seeking these funds.

According to internal reports, 64% of the allocated funding is directed at increasing smallholder productivity. Some highlights include (GAFSP 2013, p. 19) : supporting 361,085 farmers in adopting improved technologies in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Nepal and Togo ; improving irrigation and drainage services on 140,812 ha of farmland in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Liberia, Niger, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Tajikistan ; supporting 60,442 farmers in forming or joining associations including producer associations, cooperatives, water users' associations, and so forth, of which approximately 30 percent are expected to be women in Ethiopia and Togo ; and constructing 104 rural markets or market centers in Ethiopia, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

The Many Shortcomings of Investment Programs

A first cut analysis of these programs reveals several shortcomings if these programs are to truly address rural food insecurity. First, we note that the programs lack a clear definition of food security in their objectives nor are potential beneficiaries identified or prioritized in a systematic way. Second, the programs do not distinguish between investment in agricultural productivity and investment in food security. For the most part, the latter is treated as derivative of the former.

One potential concern is that without a clear food security objective to anchor programming, funding will not necessarily flow to programs that may have the most direct food security benefits.

Third, the eligibility criteria for funding under the EUFF and GAFSP also appear to be disassociated from food security objectives. The frameworks for these programs do not give specific reference to prevalence of hunger and malnutrition in target countries. Nor are relevant food insecurity metrics and benchmarks for reducing levels of food insecurity established. The criteria

are generally vague and broad, but in themselves suggest a very low threshold for the food security components of national food security plans. By comparison, these programs place greater emphasis of evidence of national and regional agricultural development strategies, which do not always necessarily include clearly articulated food security objectives and targets. The EUFF, for example, listed the following criteria for identifying priority countries and allocating resources : poverty levels and real needs of populations, food price developments and potential social and economic impact, reliance on food imports, social vulnerability and political stability, macroeconomic effects of food price developments, capacity of country to respond and implement appropriate response measures, agricultural production capacity, and resilience to external shocks (European Parliament and Council, 2008). What presided in the choice of the 50 target countries was ultimately whether they had been hit by food prices spikes or had advanced food security measures in place that were jeopardised by the GFC (Roosebroek et al., 2012).

Fourth, the majority bulk of the agriculture investment programs are targeted to least developed African countries. Sub-Saharan Africa is widely recognized as one of the world's most food insecure regions. Yet it strikes us that the bulk of the post-GFC response is so geographically concentrated. The FAO 2009 report on world food insecurity clearly illustrates that the vast majority of hungry people, not to mention small-scale farmers, reside in Asia (FAO, 2009a). This tends to indicate that the focus of the response was on programs that were both highly visible and easy to implement (Christiaensen, 2009), both technically and geographically.

Fifth, neither the EUFF nor the GAFSP has a particularly long-time horizon. The EUFF, which was designed to bridge the gap between humanitarian aid and long-term assistance, committed funds for a three-year period (2008-2011), with no built-in mechanism for replenishing these funds at the end of the operating cycle. The GAFSP has taken several years to take off and its projects are short-term interventions. At the time of their elaboration, there was no articulation of any real long-term plan or how such investment is to be maintained post-2013. A direct implication of this was that it created a strong incentive for states and implementing agencies to repeat tried and true programs based on heavy industrial inputs and processes instead of devising sustainable long-term approaches. For example, the EUFF has initiated the provision of hybrid seeds and fertilizer packages in Africa countries deemed to have underutilized agricultural potential. Though such efforts may increase yields temporarily, we are concerned that they may undermine the transition to sustainable agricultural models over the long-term.

Sixth, the GASFP's private-sector window has prompted NGOs and producer groups in developing countries to challenge the necessity for such a mechanism. The international NGO Action Aid sent a letter to the Bank noting the private-sector window is likely to benefit medium- and large-scale private actors in agriculture who already have access to commercial lending and would do little to surmount the challenges most marginal producers have to accessing credit and agricultural services (Action Aid, 2009). As the private-sector window is open to any firm and financial institution with operations in eligible countries, a legitimate question is how to ensure funding will genuinely go towards improving services for small producers and encourage the growth of small domestic firms and cooperatives, rather than have the unintended effect of increasing market concentration of existing domestic and transnational agribusiness and enterprises.

Policy and Political Implications : Initial Observations

At the broadest level, the robust political and financial support for these programs from donors, recipients, and international organizations has major implications for the future of agriculture policy and the political struggles taking place around the future of the world food system. In response to the economic incentives created by these programs, developing countries and their partners find themselves under significant pressure to implement and maintain programs consistent with the objectives of the EUFF and GAFSP, namely rapidly increasing yields and establishing market institutions to encourage entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector. These incentives are likely to weaken support for, and reinforce biases against, agricultural programs emphasizing sustainable/low-input small-scale production, agro-ecology and alternative forms of

marketing systems. In fact, a careful reading of the GAFSP illustrates that concerns over environmental sustainability, the preservation of biodiversity or climate change fall well below those of increasing yields and encouraging investment.

Improving the economic opportunities for smallholder farmers is at the core of these programs. This type of discourse is invoked because it supports the concept that small farmers hold 'untapped potential' for quickly and efficiently raising yields and boosting production. Considering the low penetration of modern farming techniques and technology among small-scale farmers, it holds that the potential marginal value of each dollar invested is theoretically high. Yet, our central argument is that only a small fraction of smallholders have the assets and profile required to take advantage of such programs. By definition, the way in which investment programs are designed excludes a priori many of those most vulnerable to food prices hikes we have witnessed : the landless, agricultural workers, pastoralists, indigenous or tribal peoples. Akram-Lodhi (2008) argues that at the core of the new agriculture policy focus, epitomized by the WDR 2008, is the vision of a 'commercially-oriented' and 'entrepreneurial' class of smallholder farming as the idealized target of their programs. This subset of smallholder farmers is best positioned to take advantage of access to new resources. Yet in practice, this leads to 'inefficient' smallholder farmers being displaced by more savvy and efficient entrepreneurial farmers, potentially leading to intensified economical and social stratification (Akram-Lodhi, 2008), and increased competition over productive resources (land, water, etc.). The losing farmers in this equation are often unable to find alternative sources of employment and livelihoods. In our view, multilateral institutions and donors are dangerously optimistic about the opportunities for non-farm income 'exit-strategies' and it is highly problematic that investment programs fail to address how inevitable losers would be compensated in the process.

In addition, these programs fall short of tapping the potential contribution of smallholder farmers to improving food security in a sustainable manner. The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science, and Technology for Development (IAASTD) noted that expanding the use of traditional smallholders techniques such as water and nutrient conservation, pest management, and development of local plant varieties and other agro-ecological practices could yield significant sustainable food security benefits[8]. However, this holistic view of smallholder farming has not been mainstreamed at the multilateral level and sustainability criteria in the EUFF and GAFSP are very vague and a low priority. The EU Parliament requested that the Commission take the IAASTD recommendations into account when drafting its Food Facility, but most of the EU funded production-boosting programs relied on the old "improved seeds and fertilizers" recipe.

This new global development policy paradigm echoes the era of structural adjustment programs (SAPs) with radical critics seeing this as another neoliberal attack by the Northern-led global aid architecture. These are certainly fair criticisms. However, we wish to point out some differences. The first is that unlike SAPs, the current paradigm is not simply about rolling back the state for the magic of the market to take its place. Rather, the new paradigm sees market failure as the context ; there is a necessary role for public sector (working alongside the private sector) to create institutions and incentives to overcome market failures. The second is that there is broad consensus towards increasing state involvement and spending in the agriculture sector, including multilateral assistance directed at supporting the creation of state capacity (as well as private sector capacity). This is unlike the SAPs era where the first target of state restructuring was the agricultural sector. However, we observe the underlying logic of a market-driven solution is at the core of past and present global development thinking.

The Transnational Peasant Response

The transnational agrarian movement La Via Campesina, and other rural social movements, have strongly opposed the multilateral post-crisis agenda that has sought to incorporate individual smallholders into high-value production serving global supply chains, thereby disconnecting peasants - as a collective - from their social, cultural and natural environment (Vía Campesina, 2008 ; Borras, 2010). Alerting the international community to the dangers of the so-called new green revolution and the limitations of the seeds and

8. Source : http://www.agassessment.org/ Accessed 21 December 2009.

fertilizer approach, the movement has engaged in a counter-framing attempt to put peasants and peasant farming at the forefront of the food crisis response. La Vía Campesina has also seized the global food crisis as an opportunity to promote and defend an alternative grounded in the 'peasant way': "Peasants can feed the planet" and "peasants can cool the planet" are slogans indicative of the role that organised peasants are demanding to play in today's globalized world. While pointing at industrial agriculture as a major contributor to climate change, La Via Campesina activists have argued that agro-ecology, low-input farming and sound peasant practices were the only way out. They have asserted their right to be and stay peasants, and emphasized the importance of diversification (not specialization), access to resources (not investments in land), autonomy (not incorporation) and relocalization (not trade liberalization). They have demanded to be involved in global, national and local policy design and policy-making (Claeys, 2012).

Over the last decades, local and national peasant organisations have worked to develop alternatives on the ground, linking consumers to producers, exchanging seeds, information, and farming practices. This takes time, trust, and carefully built networks. It also requires access to productive resources, land in particular. The crisis response does the opposite : it ignores vital issues such as access to resources – to the contrary accelerating the appropriation of nature through "green grabbing" (Fairhead, Leach, et Scoones, 2012)—, and does not build on peasant-based initiatives. Instead, it brings smallholders top-down cash-intensive solutions that may well undermine promising alternatives and endanger the cohesion of peasant networks.

Working *with peasants* requires involving them in the design and implementation of the policies and programmes that are supposed to support them. Yet, peasant organizations were not invited to take part in the global summits or coordination mechanisms that were established to elaborate the crisis response, and neither the EUFF nor the GAFSP involved such groups significantly at the programming stage, although many of the EUFF's implementation partners, such as the FAO and Oxfam, sought to work with farmers' organizations after particular projects were approved. A constructive dialogue with peasant communities would have shown the heterogeneity of peasants, from small to medium to large, from the landless to peasants depending upon hiring out labour to supplement their income from the land. It would have highlighted their mobility across multiple territories, encompassing rural and urban areas. It would have enabled the elaboration of a crisis response that truly builds on the diversity and multidimensional character of peasants' livelihood strategies.

The set of food sovereignty policies advanced by peasant groups to address the GFC would have been interesting to consider and may have led to alternative designs of the EUFF and GAFSP. Such policies included : protection of domestic food markets against both dumping (artificially low prices) and artificially high prices driven by speculation and volatility in global markets ; return to improved versions of supply management policies at the national level and improved international commodity agreements at a global level ; recovery of the productive capacity of peasant and family farm sectors, via floor prices, improved marketing boards, public-sector budgets, and genuine agrarian reform ; rebuilding improved versions of public sector and or farmer owned basic food inventories ; putting in place controls against hoarding and speculating ; establishing a moratorium on biofuels ; switching to agroecology to break the link between food and petroleum prices, and to conserve and restore the productive capacity of farm lands (Rosset 2009). None of these proposals were discussed by the architects of the EUFF and GAFSP.

Conclusion

The GFC produced a new global food security policy responses towards increasing investment in smallholder agriculture. Multilateral agriculture investment programs have gained wide currency among donors, recipient governments and multilateral organizations because these programs were matched with significant financial and political resources to ensure their success. A key step to building this policy consensus and a demand for such programs was a strategic rearticulating of the GFC as a crisis of insufficient agricultural production instead of a broader understanding of the complex and multidimensional nature of this particular historical crisis. The obfuscation of the polyvalent drivers behind the crisis enabled a new discourse of a crisis of production that facilitated the reframing of development policy

debates towards a narrow perspective about the role of small-scale agricultural producers in world agriculture.

An examination of the two flagship programs launched in response to the GFC to promote investment in smallholder agriculture, the EUFF and GAFSP, demonstrated that these programs did not adequately take into account the obstacles poor farmers themselves have identified as critical to improving their food security and livelihoods. The shortcomings of new multilateral agricultural investment program, such as a lack of anchoring in food security objectives and goals, limited geographic focus, short-termism and uncertainty whether programming is sufficiently targeted to smallholder farmers rather than larger players in the sector, raises significant concerns about the benefits to smallholders (or if such programs reinforce conditions and structures that increase stratification in the countryside). On the surface these programs can be read as a significant break with decades of mainstream development policy that for the most part excluded peasants. Yet our reading is that multilateral investment programs are in fact about promoting a new agenda of agricultural modernization ; to date these have not tackled the structural problems or minimize the price volatility that peasants and other marginal farmers face and which precipitated the GFC. Instead, the focus of these programs is to scale-up the quantity and quality of smallholder production, enabling public-private partnerships, including facilitating new linkages to regional and global markets. The extent to which such externally imposed policy paradigms will alter smallholder farming is a question for future research. We suggest that analyzing how smallholder farmers challenge the policy assumptions of these development projects and their capacity to capture the heterogeneity on the ground is a promising line of inquiry (see Eakin et al., 2014).

We observe that despite their shortcoming, investment in smallholder agriculture programs, are reflective of a new development policy consensus. Multilateral and bilateral programs have become an increasing component of the development assistance portfolio of multilateral and bilateral donors. As such, there appears to be a stickiness of these ideas and we suggest that for the medium-term agriculture development is likely to focus on restructuring smallholder agriculture towards integrations with regional and global markets and value chains. This marks an important shift in the tenor and scope of development assistance to agriculture. We further observe that the stickiness of these ideas are not restricted to Northern capitals but that these ideas have a transnational scope. Many of the policies and projects associated with the EUFF and GAFSP overlap with the new develop philanthropy by donors such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundations (Thompson, 2012). In addition, new development donors such as China and Brazil are similarly engaged in projects to increase investment in smallholder agriculture, particularly in Africa. This points towards a new transnational convergence in development thinking and practice with respect to agriculture and food security prompted by the 2008 GFC.

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