

- more hungry people in the developing countries today – 820 million – than there were in 1996
- In sub-Saharan Africa, currently 206 million hungry in the region – nearly 40 million up from 1990-92
Source: FAO State of food insecurity 2005
- Hunger coexists with abundance

- The food sovereignty movement emphasizes the autonomy of (developing) countries to set their own rules and policies for food production and trade

Suggested policy orientation

- “support local marketing of food, so that small-scale food producers can maintain their livelihoods”
- “radical change in the rules for food trade and production – removing these from WTO”

(Nyéléni, Feb. 07)



Thom Achterbosch, Food Sovereignty and Opportunities for Reaping the Gains from Trade, Wageningen, 20 Mar 07

Food security and trade

- Food security through imports makes economic sense
 - self-sufficiency does not
- Trade contributes to food security, FAO says:
 - variable production – constant demand
 - Economic growth, efficient use of resources



Thom Achterbosch, Food Sovereignty and Opportunities for Reaping the Gains from Trade, Wageningen, 20 Mar 07

Appropriate agricultural (trade) policies

- Great need for differentiated policies
- Often not clear what these are

1. Trade positions differ between countries

- Poor developing countries import staple foods
 - 9 out of 10 developing countries net buyer of cereals, oil crops, meat and milk products
- Stable or variable export earnings
- Losses from/indifferent to WTO ag reform
- Non-agricultural sectors

2. Rich country policies: some adverse... but not the single culprit for poverty or hunger

- Cotton support – dumping – export competition
- Gains from reform of own policies in South
- Staple importers benefit from current policies
 - Pushing down consumer prices – give up for import substitution?
- Market failure in poor country agriculture



Thom Achterbosch, Food Sovereignty and Opportunities for Reaping the Gains from Trade, Wageningen, 20 Mar 07

3. Stages of development differ

- Opportunities on and off the farm
- Liberalized agriculture in need of government support?
 - Opportunities for productivity growth; state of natural resource base
- Vested interests, power balance in agriculture



Thom Achterbosch, Food Sovereignty and Opportunities for Reaping the Gains from Trade, Wageningen, 20 Mar 07

Food s. and the debate on food security and trade

Positive

- Bring trade policies in line with development objectives
- Continued awareness on distortions in global agricultural trade, e.g. dumping, food aid.
- Link between agricultural trade, trade rules and natural resources

Not constructive

- "Right to production" ignores migration to off-farm opportunities
- Flawed perspective on trade ("less imports are better")
- Downplaying consumer interests – primarily access to low-priced food
- TNC bash – trade policies prone to lobbies from many parties
- Removing agriculture from WTO negotiation table best way to ensure that rich country policies will remain unchanged

End

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