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# **INFORMATION SHARING AND CONSULTATION AMONG MAJOR FOOD AID DONORS**

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**An IFPRI Report to  
the Canadian International Development Agency,  
the Development Directorate-General of the European Commission,  
and the United States Agency for International Development**

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## Preface

The problems that arise in providing food aid to a large number of developing countries for both emergency and nonemergency purposes have been compounded during the last two decades by inadequate information sharing and consultation among an increasing number of food aid donors. This study prepared on behalf of the International Food Policy Research Institute by Professor Raymond Hopkins examines existing arrangements in this connection and suggests what can be done to improve and strengthen them in order to increase the effectiveness of food aid.

The recommendations made in the report deal with uniformity of reporting of food aid on a regular basis, formation of donor working groups for each recipient country, regularization of consultations among senior donor officials, and joint conferences and staff training programs. The report does not call for radical changes in current arrangements or creation of large new institutions. It shows that substantial improvements in the existing situation can be brought about by making relatively small changes in current food aid institutions and arrangements, by building on and systematizing some of their existing features or by replicating cooperative arrangements that have worked successfully in some recipient countries.

While the recommendations are broad based and should help to increase the effectiveness of all food aid activities, their most immediate impact is likely to be on emergency aid. If the development

impact of food aid is to be strengthened, the underlying logic of the recommendations must be extended specifically to nonemergency food aid. Cooperation in the field must be strengthened to achieve greater integration between the nonemergency food aid programs of different donors and indeed between food aid, other aid, and domestic development activities in recipient countries so as to take maximum advantage of the external economies that flow from all such activities. It is this aspect of donor consultation to which greater attention now needs to be paid and on which further work can now profitably be done.

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May 22, 1985

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Information Sharing and Consultation among  
Major Food Aid Donors  
Executive Summary

This report recommends enhanced cooperation among donors. This is desirable in light of (1) the increased commonality of purpose among donors of food aid, (2) the difficulties in administering food aid to African states where need has grown the most, and (3) the greater sharing of food aid provision among donors compared to one and two decades ago. Information sharing among donors would increase efficiency in achieving the goals of food aid. It would improve the framework for decisions on allocations through more complete and useful information about recipients' circumstances. It would reduce costs and anomalies in current information collection exercises. It would allow for more informed donor action in multilateral bodies, and it would allow donors to realize economies of scale and to develop informal working relations through shared training and conferences.

The study recommends four steps that donors undertake. First, a working group in each important recipient country should be charged with preparing a common monthly report. Second, a formula for achieving uniformity in reporting should be established and used. Third, consultations among senior donor officials should become regularized. Fourth, conferences and staff training should be undertaken jointly, using where appropriate the services of existing resources such as the International Food Policy Research Institute and the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex.

These steps, it is argued, will lead to enhanced productivity of donor organizations through three mechanisms: (1) reduced costs of obtaining timely, corroborated information, (2) increased information availability, and (3) reduced ineffective programming of food aid, e.g. aid supplied in unmanageable fashion or to unrewarding projects.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the last decade the system of food aid has changed substantially. The results of these changes provide a basis for enhanced cooperation among food aid donors. Especially opportune is greater sharing of information. Three donors--the United States, Canada, and the European Community--provide about 80% of food aid transfers in the 1980's. This is a substantial shift from the period in the mid-1950's to the early 1970's when the United States was the predominant provider of food aid, supplying by itself over 80% of food aid resources. In 1984 the largest proportion of food aid went to Sub Saharan Africa, a region in which information and institutions to facilitate efficient food aid utilization are comparatively weak. In 1970 only about 3% of food aid went to this region. Finally, development impact and relief of hunger have become high priorities for all major donors. In these circumstances a basis for conscious efforts to improve donor effectiveness through concerted actions has arisen.

Purpose and Scope of Study. This study analyzes aspects of management of the food aid systems of the three largest providers of food aid: Canada, the European Community, and the United States. The study's purpose is to pinpoint opportunities for information sharing and for cooperation among donors that will enhance the effectiveness of their resource transfers in foodstuffs. To do this a review of current practices of the agencies in each donor was undertaken in April-June 1984. This was done through interviews with officials and an examination of recent activity and documents. Based on this review steps for donor agencies to consider in order to advance their mutual goals are proposed. The report is divided into five sections: this one, an introduction; second, a review of experience in food aid information sharing; third, a discussion of steps that might be undertaken; fourth, a summary and conclusion, and, finally, a set of appendices.

Modalities of Cooperation. Donor government policies and practices are

concerted in basically three ways: by negotiating specific agreements, by sharing information and analysis, and by common external stimulus. All three modes have shaped actions by major donors of food aid. Through the founding of the World Food Program in 1963, the signing of several Food Aid Conventions beginning 1967, and the resolutions passed by the 1974 World Food Conference, donor states have acknowledged general principles and submitted to common obligations. These now constitute a framework for concerting food aid.

Beyond this framework, donors have informally and in ad hoc fashion shared information on their goals and specific undertakings. Such efforts occurred basically in response to felt needs to make more informed decisions. For example, donors have used international meetings as occasions to discuss common problems. They have also exchanged information on an ad hoc basis.

Finally, in the absence of formal agreements and even information sharing, there have been common patterns of action by donors in light of changing external situations. For example, the proportion of food used for emergency purposes and for projects grew in the late 1970's as donors unilaterally decided to channel a larger proportion of their food aid multilaterally. This shift was an action taken in common by several donors that lacked the capacity to manage food aid effectively through bilateral mechanisms. In this case harmony of action emerged simply from common interests.

These three modes for coordinated action are analytically and sometimes organizationally distinct, but they are woven together in their effects. The first mode of concerting action is the most formal and institutionalized form. It is also the most difficult to achieve. It can be costly to realize, not only in time and money, but also in creating limitations that may reduce future desired flexibility. Successfully negotiated patterns usually arise after experience and success with the other two modes.<sup>(1)</sup>

The second mode, exchanging information, is motivated by interdependence in

realizing shared goals. In this instance, officials in several countries recognize benefits derived from coordination of their actions with others. They desire, for example, to avoid congesting harbors and warehouses with simultaneous food aid arrivals.

The third mode, dictated by structural factors, is a natural product of the way international action proceeds.(2) It requires no special action among donors, but results from the common pressures they face internally and externally, as in the common response by donors to provide more food aid to meet African shortages in 1983-85.

This study focuses on the second mode for concerting donor practices, namely information sharing. This mode has several desirable properties. It enables donors to seek improved performance and efficiency through exchanges and consultation without necessitating formal agreements. It can also reduce the burden of dealing with other organizations either within or outside the major implementing agencies of the donors. That is, transnational coalitions of donor organizations may be able to address problems directly which otherwise would require building coalitions with less accommodating parties and pursuing less homogeneous food aid goals. Based on standard analyses regarding the benefits of collective undertakings, this report assumes that effectiveness of food aid as a humanitarian and developmental resource and as an instrument of policy among donor countries can be significantly enhanced through consultations and the greater sharing of information. (3)

The Basis for Enhanced Donor Action. Gains from greater information sharing and consultation have grown in recent years for two reasons. These provide a basis for, i.e., create an interest in, donor action.

First, food aid has become less tied to the surplus disposal needs of agricultural producers. In the last decade the capacity of exporting countries commercially to sell stocks in international trade has grown. In addition, a number of non-exporting countries have become providers of food aid. As a result domestic

agricultural pressures are less determinative of food aid decisions. Thus in the 1980's there is greater shared agreement among major donors that the primary use of food aid should be as a development resource, except when emergencies take precedence. This agreement gives donors an interest in using common undertakings since competitive goals have receded.

Second, in the early 1980's the critical need for food aid shifted from large countries in Asia to small and extremely underdeveloped states in Africa. In the African context, donors have found that information important to providing timely and effective food aid is absent or incomplete. Most donors, especially smaller contributors, have few overseas staff capable of providing information and management for effective food aid transfers. Thus the African need for food aid has placed a special burden on the administrative resources of donors. In the light of these two developments -- the shift from surplus disposal to development purposes, and the shift to Africa as a major target for food aid -- there is good reason to investigate additional common undertakings by donors.

There are a number of specific shortcomings and problems in achieving current food aid goals that arise from lack of information or from bottlenecks in delivering aid discovered too late to be avoided. These are discussed in some detail in the sections outlining specific steps. In general, prominent problems include late identification of need requests for aid, divergent estimates of the size of need, inadequate knowledge as to what role each donor is filling, uncoordinated arrivals that disrupt storage and transportation systems, and miscalculation of the effects of food aid on local markets and bureaucracies. The goals of food aid can be better served when these shortcomings are reduced or eliminated.

Constraints Facing Donors. Although a basis for enhanced information sharing and consultation exists among donors, constraints to achieve this also exist. First, there are different bureaucratic and political requirements within which each donor agency and their governments must work. Domestic agricultural interests

prefer certain commodities be used as food aid; legislatures demand accounting. Second, each donor enjoys different political and economic relationships with recipient countries, whether in Africa or elsewhere. These factors create a series of constraints by donors on themselves which limit the extent to which information sharing and greater cooperation will be possible. In addition other constraints arise from the concerns of recipient countries. Recipients are understandably worried about the potential "ganging up" of donor countries. They often see this as objectionable, because it actually or at least seemingly threatens their sovereignty and independence of policy making. Such concerns, require sensitivity on the part of donors. These domestic and international constraints faced by Canada, the EEC, and the United States have similar implications for all donors.

Proposals to improve information sharing and increase consultation must recognize these. This study will seek within these constraints to identify changes in practice that could improve the effectiveness of both emergency as well as longer-term uses of food aid. Changes will be easier where current practices are largely a product of bureaucratic inertia and not reflective of deeply imbedded constraints.

## 2. HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE OF DONOR INFORMATION SHARING

The history of information sharing and consultation reveals a rich set of methods for achieving these ends. Consultations and exchanges have taken place bilaterally, among small subsets of donors and in rather formal, multilateral arenas. As a backdrop to the analyses and conclusions of this study, the history and current array of exchange modalities of donors will be reviewed.

Active consultation among food aid donors was hardly necessary when the United States provided over 90% of food aid in the 1950's. For Canada and a few other countries that provided food aid in the 1950's and 1960's food aid was principally

an occasion to develop targets for their own humanitarian or political interests with little reference to the United States' actions. The major coordination that took place in this period arose from efforts to avoid trade conflicts among grain exporters. Over the years donor consultation has increased. The number of international points of contact has grown, as have occasion for bilateral consultations. This growth is briefly traced as a way to describe the currently existing opportunities for donor exchanges.

The first formal arena for donor consultation and information sharing was created by commercial trade interests. Representatives of trading states met in the Committee on Surplus Disposal (CSD) established in 1954 as a sub-committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Committee on Commodities. This Committee on Surplus Disposal has been in continuous existence since then. In the early years the CSD provided a major mechanism for sharing information and coordinating practices among donors. It did this principally not for developmental or humanitarian purposes but rather to prevent food aid, most often from the United States, from violating the basic principles of free trade. These principles as espoused in the framework of GATT. They dominated the international trading order founded following World War II and legitimated a role for the CSD. In 1985, competition with commercial sales is a minor concern. Nevertheless, the CSD still meets, records most food aid transactions, and provides these to FAO statistical units.

Almost ten years after the formalization of bilateral food aid through the PL 480 program, the World Food Program (WFP) was inaugurated under the auspices of the United Nations and the FAO. Its creation, first agreed upon in 1961, provided a second location for coordination and information sharing among donors. At this time the United States provided about half the support for the WFP. Initially an inter-governmental committee (IGA) met to work out the framework and approve projects for the activities of the World Food Program. The IGA continued in

existence with semi-annual meetings for approximately ten years until the World Food Conference of 1974. At this time a need for a broader coordination of food aid was envisaged, and a new, more comprehensive body was recommended by the Conference. In 1975, the IGA was dissolved and the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programs (CFA) was established. Its mandate was to serve not only as a review board for the World Food Program but also as a policy shaping body responsible for working with donor and recipient countries. It was expected to develop and facilitate the implementation of a common set of goals and policies and to reduce inefficiencies in the food aid system. It also continued in its role as the governing body of the WFP with final authority over projects. The extent to which the CFA has been successful in fulfilling its policy coordination mandate is debatable. Certainly a number of efforts have been made at meetings of the CFA, particularly through the tabling of papers on policy, to create a framework of general principles which would govern the activities of donors and recipients. Frictions within the CFA and organizational strains between the FAO and WFP have made it an often difficult arena within which donors might undertake coordination. For one thing, many donor state actions are construed in terms of the organizational struggles of the international bodies and/or set in terms of a North-South resource debate. For example, nearly all the proposals put forward by the CFA have involved increased concessionality of aid, increased amounts of absolute resource transfer and increased discretion for recipients in the food aid system. These claims upon donor action lead them to see CFA meetings as offering limited useful opportunities for productive information exchanges.

A case can be made that more food aid should be channeled multi-laterally, that food aid itself needs to be increased, that food aid should be less tied to the supply surpluses in donor countries and more related to the commodity needs of recipients, and that there should be greater concessionality in the provision of food aid. Nonetheless, all these assertions that recent CFA meetings have put

forward were essentially aimed at increasing the financial contributions of donors. Rather less effort was made to expand the managerial capacity of either donor or recipients and few efforts have been made to increase the burdens or responsibilities of recipients. The resource transfer aspects of CFA resolutions on food aid policies were most detectible at the height of the bargaining over G-77 demands in the United Nations system in the late 1970's. In the last two to three years, the CFA seems to have operated in a balanced manner regarding donor and recipient objectives. The public and private actions of its secretariat have suggested an interest in furthering both recipient and donor concerns. Moreover, unlike the FAO, with its clear leadership control by the G-77 group of countries, the World Food Program based on 30 members elected equally among donor and recipient countries, has a different political base. As a result it offers the most congenial arena for donor countries in the UN system and one more likely to be trusted with new initiatives.

Five years after the founding of the WFP, and fourteen years after the CSD was established, the International Wheat Council, as a part of the newly negotiated Food Aid Convention (FAC) of 1967, organized members of the Convention in a Food Aid Committee. The task of the Committee as served by the Council's secretariat, has been to monitor compliance with the the FAC, seeing whether the minimal tonnage commitments by states were met. For many years this Committee has met in conjunction with meetings of the International Wheat Council. These sessions, normally held twice a year, have been largely perfunctory. They were attended by trade, foreign affairs, and agricultural officials who reviewed the details of shipments. Since 1982, under the initiative of the IWC secretariat, the Food Aid Committee has been urged to hold informal sessions and to discuss a variety of issues of significant interest to development agency officials in donor countries. These include future allocations of food aid, evaluations of aid, developmental considerations, the effectiveness of transportation, the adequacy of reporting and

so forth. To date very little of import has resulted from these efforts.

In addition to these international bodies specialized in food aid activities, there are other international organizations that assist in donor consultation. The Food and Agricultural Organization has long had an interest in food aid, beginning with its 'food bank' proposal in the 1940's and continuing with its creation of the CSD. The Food and Agricultural Organization is one of the two sponsoring agencies of the WFP and services many of its technical needs. Further, the FAO, through its Food Security and Food Aid Policies Group in the Commodities and Trade Division has produced information helpful to donors on flows of food aid, on production and food shortages (as in the Special Report - Food Crops and Shortages), on food aid needs (in the Cereal Import Requirements) and on general food conditions (the Food Outlook). In 1983-84, in conjunction with the WFP, it has prepared a series of emergency reports on the African situation.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), founded in 1960 and composed of "western" industrialized states, has sought to help members coordinate actions to their mutual benefit. Through its Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the OECD has collated and circulated information on food aid as part of its general effort to promote donor cooperation in development. In 1974, 1978 and 1984 the OECD also sponsored reports and conferences to support better understanding of the role and effect of food aid. On the one hand, the OECD, in comparison with international food agencies, offers a less specialized and a less universal forum for donor states to meet. On the other hand, it is an attractive site for major donor communication because its secretariat's main purpose is coordination among major donor states.

These five international organs - the CSD, CFA, FAC, FAO and DAC - have different capabilities to facilitate or hinder information exchange. These capabilities are features that arose historically. Such constraints on what an organization can and cannot do well are not easily changed. Institutionally

imbedded features also place constraints on the administrative frameworks of major donors. Thus the ease with which donors can use one or another international forum varies with each donor's particular situation.

This point can be illustrated by examining possible donors' use of CFA meetings for informational exchanges. The European Commission only has observer status at the CFA. As a result it does view CFA meetings in the same light as national donors. In Canada, Agriculture Canada was made the "lead" agency to the World Food Program at its inception because the creation of the WFP was of particular interest to key personalities working at Agriculture Canada and because the WFP was associated with the FAO, already a major liaison for Agriculture Canada. This might make the CFA a less easy location for Canada to exchange ideas. However recently the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has provided major leadership in the CFA and in dealings with the WFP. Nevertheless, the formal institutional responsibilities established in the early 1960's could limit the ease of using the CFA for CIDA.

For the United States it would be easier to use the CFA for informal meetings only once a year. US AID and USDA rotate leadership of their CFA delegation and AID is more likely to have senior officials there once a year. For the European Community it would be unusual for the counterpart of a US assistant administrator or a Canadian director of FACE or Vice-President of the multi-lateral division to attend the Rome meetings. In short, different donors are represented differently in the various fora, and this places some limits on what each arena can do to facilitate information sharing.

Donor organizational features also affect bilateral prospects. Ties between agricultural ministries can help the US and Canadians to share information, but the tensions between European and North American agriculture officials has the opposite spill over effect. Thanks to historical origins, the United States places the principal budget appropriation for food aid in the Department of Agriculture, a

practice unique among food aid donors. (4) Recall, in fact, that the impetus for American food aid arose largely from the need to dispose of US government stocks owned by the Department of Agriculture in the early 1950's. The program and its budget were assigned to Agriculture. In Canada, and the Community, agriculture officials have played a smaller role in the budget. Consequently, agricultural officials have less stake and interest in information flows for these donors.(5)

In recipient countries bilateral consultations have occurred among development agency officials as need, interest and staff time allowed. Among officials at headquarters, bilateral consultations and information exchanges have been ad hoc. Occasionally members of the United States delegation to the CFA have visited Brussels for talks prior or after the Rome meetings. European delegates to other meetings, such as the World Food Council, have stopped in Washington to discuss food aid issues. When the United States and Canada hold informal consultations on agricultural issues, CIDA officials have used the occasion to review food aid topics with their American counterparts as well as with officials of the United States Department of Agriculture.

Other ad hoc occasions have also arisen for bilateral or even multilateral exchanges, such as seminars sponsored by the WFP or the University of Sussex. In general, because of the sporadic and untargeted nature of these exchanges, they have not had much institutional impact. They have been generally assessed as valuable by the officials involved, however. This is good evidence that more focused, regular informal meetings would be desirable. (6)

A last word on the place of development units in donor bureaucracies is in order. This "place" affects the interest of such units in information sharing and thus the collective receptivity for information sharing. Food aid has tended to serve multiple purposes: the development of trade relations, the establishment of improved diplomatic ties between countries, the relief of emergency and long-term hunger needs, and the improvement of development. As a result the programs of

development agencies in most donors have been subject to competing purposes. Within the different bureaucratic structures of Canada, the European Community, and the United States these multiple purposes result in a different interest in knowledge to support food aid policy. Thus information available is often a result of a series of tradeoffs. In Canada, for example, agriculture and trade interests (through Agriculture Canada and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) have some influence over food aid. They are not overly concerned by information sharing needs. In the European Community both the Development Directorate (DG-VIII) and the Agriculture Directorate (DG-VI) have long had formal roles in the food aid program. DG-VI officials evinced no special concern for greater donor consultation. Such multiple bureaucratic involvement and competing purposes are most prominent in the United States program. This results from several factors including the fact that the American program is the most explicitly bound to an inter-agency framework for decision-making.(7) USDA officials did not find any relevant data missing in their food aid considerations. Different bureaucracies have different interests.

Information used to make decisions on food aid allocations taken within the Canadian, European and American bureaucracies, therefore, have a pattern of timing, inter-agency consultation, and final authoritative quality unique to each particular institution. The framework of decision making for each country is described briefly in Appendix A. A major concern in planning ways to achieve a greater sharing of information among donors is to recognize the constraints imposed by those parts of the food aid policy process with little historical interest in greater sharing. The virtue of improved information sharing must not only be worth the initial cost but also compete successfully with other goals imposed on the three donors by forces outside their development agencies. Additional staff in Africa to strengthen information from there would not be a high priority for trade interests, for example.

This consideration dampens but does not extinguish a rationale to coordinate

food aid better in order to serve developmental purposes and to overcome problems in meeting emergency needs. Certainly emergency needs, particularly in Africa, are a significant concern of the three major donors, both among their general public and for senior governmental officials. This need gives donor development agencies, (AID, CIDA and DG-VIII) an opportunity to innovate new procedures to concert more their food aid activity.

Summary. Differences in the bureaucratic framework, the budgetary calendars, and the pressures, especially from agricultural interests, arising outside each agency make this difficult. The effect of these factors upon food aid decisions will not disappear. As a result there are limits on the extent to which common undertakings can occur. Each donor will continue to have distinctive ways of acting. Nevertheless, the capacity for multi-donor coordination has been demonstrated. In countries such as Bangladesh and Mali donors have taken significant steps to coordinate information gathering and food aid deliveries. These experiences suggest that a much greater degree of donor coordination is possible. This would facilitate information sharing, the development of common projects, and greater effectiveness in helping the food policy framework of the recipient country. In summary, it will be important that each donor understand the kinds of constraints faced by the other, and to keep this information foremost in their minds in formulating and executing concerted undertakings. In the specific steps recommended such limits have been carefully weighed. Bold, sweeping ideas have been generally rejected as a result.

### 3. NEW STEPS IN DONOR INFORMATION SHARING

Four prospects for improving donor information sharing are proposed in this report. These are: first, enhanced coordination in field reporting of information about recipient countries; second, greater standardization of administrative accounting of the flows of food aid; third, regular consultation prior to meetings, such as those of the CFA and the International Wheat Council's Food Aid Committee; and fourth, the development of conferences, meetings and common training opportunities among several donors. These four undertakings are the principal areas in which it will be possible, without violating exigencies of existing institutional constraints in major donors, for the principal agencies (CIDA, DG-VIII, and AID) to improve their level of information sharing.

#### Coordinated Country Reports

A major problem, especially in Africa, has been the gap between the information and analysis available to donors and that needed for confident decision making. Another problem has been differences between the information of different donors and that put forward by international agencies, particularly the FAO, in estimating food aid needs. Considerable time within the three major donors in 1983-84 has been devoted to intra-agency discussions with respect to the estimated needs of recipients, most frequently occasioned by African "emergency" cases. In addition, contradictory information regarding acute needs (famine) and chronic needs has also been a source of both public and private concern. The result of this has been a diversion of resources of the major agencies, as well as a problem of public relations for them.

When humanitarian groups and legislative bodies become animated by a concern over hunger, it is often as a result of pronouncements by the FAO or by reports of voluntary agencies. Food aid officials find themselves allocating time to explain and justify their activity. Some prodding is an important device for insuring

responsiveness of food aid, and for providing opportunities for cross checking of information. It helps insure the sensitivity of donor agencies to the size and urgency of needs in potential recipient countries. Nevertheless, after some point, certainly if the information is incomplete or misleading, this becomes a burden, diluting resources. Uncertainty or controversy over the accuracy of need estimates and delivery conditions may actually mitigate against timely, responsive reactions to food aid needs when agencies have to guard against over reaction for which they have been criticized. While it is unlikely that criticism can be entirely avoided, nevertheless improved information from the field, through a more concerted and coordinated reporting system, would go a long way towards reducing conflicting interpretations and providing a confident basis for collective action among donors.

To meet the critical needs of individual countries, and to do so without errors such as inappropriate timing of shipments, or shipping "too much food", accurate and trustworthy reports need to be circulated. Such reports could avoid being seen as tainted by the promotional desires of one or another "lobby." To accomplish this four steps would be helpful: (1) creating country level working groups; (2) using occasional multi-donor missions; (3) exchanging reports from the field; and (4) coordinating more satisfactorily field information used in international reports.

Country Level Working Groups: The Rationale. The most recent and detailed information available on recipient countries' food situation largely exists in the countries themselves. Such information is developed by officials of the recipient country and is collated by the overseas officials of donor countries. If each donor mission individually tries to collect and evaluate information on the needs of a particular country, the result will be less timely and complete information for each donor. Thus a multi-donor working group within each substantial food aid recipient is desirable. In Bangladesh, in the mid-1970's, a food aid working group was set up, with encouragement from major donors as well as the World Food Program and the World Bank. The Bangladesh working group by 1984 evolved into an effective and

institutionalized activity, able to generate monthly reports that contain well organized and fairly complete data relevant to decisions regarding food aid levels. This report contains most of the information desired. For example it contains stock levels, prices for the major commodities of rice and wheat in the open and state regulated markets and the expected levels of commercial and food aid imports. These data are updated each month. About the only important information not contained in the report would be prices on a regional basis, which would allow analysts to track inter-regional variations in price. This last piece of information is important as an early warning signal that market separation is occurring, usually a sign of regional shortfalls as anticipated shortfalls are reflected in current prices through the process of individual hoarding or higher mark-ups by middlemen. Data on regional prices are collected in Bangladesh and are available to the food aid group.

The Bangladesh model for recipient reporting provides a good basic recipe for organizing country level working groups and for specifying the data they should seek. Basically two types of data are relevant: information on the food system of the recipient, and information on the macro policy and political framework of the country.

The food system data in the report should include an estimate for the size of domestically held stocks of major commodities and the extent to which these commodities are traded within the country or externally. Thus, for example, in African countries a major staple might be maize or sorghum and the proportion traded might be 15-40% with the rest grown and consumed by the same village or household unit. Total production of major staple commodities in a country would be a second piece of important information. Production, of course, should be sought independently of information on stocks. Cases where production is estimated from the level of government purchases should be avoided. A third piece of information would be to disaggregate the national picture so that a distribution of production and stock will show whether there are shortfall pockets within a country and give an

indication of the level of transfers needed to restore balance within the particular marketing or political divisions of the country. A fourth item of food system information would be the prices of major food commodities in a country. Information on subsidized prices offered through particular schemes, whether it be food stamps, fair price shops or whatever should be included as well as measurements of actual open market or parallel market prices. As with stock and production data, price information should be provided by locality so that, as discussed already, shifts in the regional distribution of prices can be observed in order to detect the occurrence of regional shortfall problems. A fifth type of information on the food system would be a country's expected imports, both commercial imports and food aid. The historical levels as well as expected levels over the ensuing months and perhaps year would be germane. Finally a report on the marketing and logistical capabilities of the country is desirable. Information is needed with respect to transportation costs within the country, harbor facilities, maximum storage capabilities and seasonal fluctuations in these logistical capabilities should be included in the report on the recipient country's food system.

For emergency situations additional information would be desirable to reassure donor country headquarters that anticipation of need and preparations to manage distribution are adequate and appropriate. Without a clear, concrete description of the extent of emergency needs, donor responses are necessarily sluggish. Emergency data or needs would include information on assessed and/or expected crop shortfalls, the population likely to be affected, responses of the government and population to the emergency, and the requirements in food, transport and delivery support services needed for effective relief. As the situation unfolds details about logistics and the operational activities of delivery agents such as voluntary organizations and recipient government ministries would also be needed.

This fairly extensive data on the macro policy context is important background. It should be required for new or additional food aid allocations and for intelligent

discussions between donors and recipients. Furthermore, its generation will assist some donors more readily to respond to those countries which have undertaken food policy measures aimed at enhancing their food security. This security concern makes it legitimate for the reporting system to include information on the food policy activities of national governments. Among the important pieces of information of which donor country policy makers ought to be informed is the role played by government parastatal organizations in the stabilization and pricing of major grains and staple commodities. A number of questions deserve answers. Where parastatals exist, and they do exist in most recipient countries, is the intervention systematic and continuous over time? Is the intervention at the price stipulated by the government formally observed? Is the size of the intervention a relatively constant fraction of the national production, or, if not, what are the fluctuations in this? Is the overall effect of the parastatal to raise or lower national grain prices (to the extent a straight forward analysis would bear some light on this question) and is the intervention agency self-sustaining financially? Is it running large deficits, and are these deficits financed in an inflationary or non-inflationary manner? Another set of questions needs to deal with the relationship between food imports and national food pricing or production activities. Overvalued exchange rates, especially in Africa, have been pointed out as having a strong negative influence on domestic production. These have been blamed for rising grain imports and for the dwindling supplies of foreign exchange reserves. Foreign reserves relate to the food system because they enable a government to import food speedily and, if necessary, on a commercial basis when a shortfall arises. A general descriptive and statistical summary of the germane information in this policy area would be appropriate for the policy makers in donor countries. Finally, for countries that have undertaken food sector strategies or have otherwise declared policies of food self-reliance, progress on the specific government activities planned deserves some review and monitoring. There are frequent instances of

countries which have rhetorically declared a strong interest in food self-reliance or have adopted a food sector strategy but whose actions to implement such declarations have been intermittent and sometimes inconsistent. The result is that countries undertaking food security or food sector improvement goals have on many occasions fallen short of the declared objectives not because of unfortunate weather but because priorities given to other goals have eroded the declared intentions of the government.

To summarize, as background for the negotiation of food aid, information on the food system and on the macro policy context is appropriate and to some extent essential for food aid officials if they are to serve effectively their goals in the allocation and actual delivery of food aid. Obviously other officials involved in direct negotiations with recipient countries have roles to play. They too would find such information useful if it were part of a normal report. To some degree this information is already solicited as part of the food aid request procedures used by the Canadian government and as part of the USAID's Annual Budget Submissions. The shortcomings of these existing built-in mechanisms are that they often have incomplete or out of date information. They usually need to be supplemented by more information to enable various development agency officials to appraise and compare the need of the recipient countries. A comparison of the information proposed here with what is now expected in the preparation of food aid requests, suggest that substantially more information should be generated, probably not as a requirement for submission of food aid requests but at some point in the process of the aid allocation.

Generating substantially more information, especially in Africa, will require a country by country effort. The cooperation of a recipient country should be expected, though it may not always be enthusiastic. Several general points are worth noting. First, time devoted to gathering more information competes with other tasks. It will be necessary to provide for additional person hours for this task or

to give it priority over other tasks. This may require additional staffing in Africa and/or support for expanded local information generation. This is especially the case where existing personnel have little experience deriving such information. Second, the reports have to be relied upon in reaching allocation decisions. The current country descriptions in the "Presentation Note" associated with allocation decisions in the European Community's announcement of Commission Decisions or the background reviews prepared by USDA for meetings of interagency working group of the US DCC Food Aid Subcommittee have but a fraction of the information pertinent to decisions. Additional knowledge beyond these sketches about countries can be presumed to be used in arriving at decisions. Even so, it would be desirable for food situation analyses to become regularly utilized as a working document within agencies. Otherwise field preparation efforts will not be serious. Third, cooperation from several primary data gatherers would be normally expected. Specifically, FAO early warning team assessments, NOAA rainfall data, agriculture extension workers reports and census bureau surveys should all be accessible to those compiling a monthly report. The commercial trading decisions of food aid recipients (with the exception of Egypt) are extremely unlikely to affect prices internationally. As a result transparency, not secrecy, should be the order of the day. Reluctance to reveal information about a domestic food system should not be acceptable behavior. Suggestions about ways donors might achieve the recommended expansion of information are outlined in Appendix C.

Another advantage arises when the flow of food aid and commercial imports is planned in conjunction with a mapping of the regional and total national needs of the country. The likelihood is reduced that administrative problems will arise in supplying food aid; in the past such problems have occasionally been egregious and have caused considerable harm and embarrassment. Mistakes in food aid management in the past have included the arrival of food aid at a time when it is least needed (given the seasonal fluctuations of food availability in a country), the arrival of

food aid at a time of port congestion and the storage of food aid because it can be moved internally. When the arrival of commodities has been unfortuitous in these ways in the past, heavy demurrage charges or actual losses in food have sometimes occurred. Attention to these problems has grown over the years and currently considerable management attention is addressed to minimize these problems. Nevertheless substantial logistical problems continue to be a subject of major concern, especially in Africa where capacity for alternative methods of supplying particular countries is very limited and seasonal fluctuations in both transport availability as well as food supply are also substantial. Often at the country level there is at least awareness of these problems by donor country officials with responsibility for agriculture or food issues. However, this information does not always reach the attention of officials in the donor agency's headquarters. It is rarely shared at this level of detail and nuance with other donors. The multi-donor working group, through preparation of a common report that could be quickly shared and circulated overseas would overcome this failure of communication.

Would this system really be worth the effort? There is currently no shortage of information and documents for food aid officials, particularly those in headquarters agency, to absorb. Adding a monthly document from a variety of countries would increase the information burden on officials in Ottawa, Brussels, Washington and elsewhere. Country reports, therefore, would have to be concise and focused. Their major readership would be officials specialized in regional or country affairs who would appreciate the data. Their availability for senior officials would be more on an "as needed" basis, but this could be an enormous benefit for food aid management. At this level legislative leaders and international officials place substantial pressure on officials to direct food aid allocations in one fashion or another in order to meet particular claims regarding needs. The availability to officials of a common, multinationally reviewed information base for responding to such claims - whether affirmatively or negatively

- would be a substantial asset.

A common form for preparing reports is not recommended, but guidelines that list features to be included should be circulated. A draft list is offered in Appendix C. Avoiding a common form is recommended because each country on which reports are prepared will have some unique features such as market separation due to different tastes or the inaccessibility of particular regions to domestic food supply. The main point of the collaborative approach then is that a more common understanding among donors would advantage the entire community that participates in food aid assessments. Furthermore, it would reduce the extent to which divergent judgments are reached simply on the basis of different information. Divergences then could be pinpointed as to their origin, usually arising from different assumptions about the way in which needs are assessed or in which responsibilities for responding to needs are allocated among providers of food aid.

Country Level Working Groups: Their Creation. A number of countries have already established at least informal working groups along the lines of the Bangladesh group. Such groups meet, often as part of a larger donor country meeting, usually on a monthly basis, and develop some reports that they share among themselves. Where such informal groups currently exist, the reinforcement and upgrading of their activities is possible through prodding and institutional incentives provided by the donor agencies headquarters. In many countries where little or nothing exists along the lines of a multi-donor working group, efforts to establish one are in order. It is unlikely that any particular bilateral donor, the World Bank or the World Food Program would be in a position to provide the required leadership to establish a group in every case. The most sensible option for advancing multi-donor working groups in relevant food aid countries, certainly for many in Sub-saharan Africa, would be for existing personnel to meet and to work out a division of responsibilities which would reflect the size of staff and intellectual resources available within each recipient country's capital. There

would be instances in which one or another bilateral donor would take the lead, and some instances where it is conceivable that the World Food Program or World Bank could play a leadership role.(8) One delegation or mission would be regularly responsible for organizing a monthly meeting and preparing the basic statistical reports which would be shared among all donors. Flexibility in approach is important in order to take advantage of the talent found in each country.

This enterprise should be one of reciprocity. A large role for the United States is possible, given that the United States provides somewhat over 50% of food aid, and has the largest cadre of overseas professionals (albeit not many food system professionals). Donors with especially strong programs in certain countries, for example the European Community in ACP countries, could take the lead in organizing working groups and providing information on the political and economic situation in various countries. Thus different donors may appropriately play a major role among donors in different countries. A review of the recipient country information available to FVA of AID, the Food Aid Coordination and Evaluation unit in Canada and the food aid division of the DG-VIII, as well as to such ad hoc institutions as the Club du Sahel, suggests that different donors all have some additional information to share that can benefit all participants.

Cooperation of the recipient government is highly desirable in such an exercise. In Bangladesh the government sees an advantage for itself when donors have timely and trustworthy information on conditions in their food system. Although this exposes the Bangladesh government to scrutiny and diminishes their option to conceal information about potential food shortages, these "sacrifices" do not seem to have proved costly. Although some governments consider such information highly sensitive, greater trust and speed of response from donors are advantages that accrue to countries in need of food aid from cooperating with a working group. Indeed some recipient officials may find the information collated on production, stocks and prices a real asset. The existence of a multi-donor working group may

also assist recipients in effectively seeking food aid. Finally, insuring some transparency for information on food would reduce the advantage that special and organized groups might achieve through access to information which was not public. This, of course, is especially true when a period of impending shortages arises.

In sum, many donors, including major donors, lack the capacity to produce timely, adequate assessments of the food situation and food needs of potential recipients. Under the aegis of at least one donor, however, usually Canada, the EEC or the US, and with the support or collaboration of the WFP (and possibly World Bank personnel), an organization that could pull together data and prepare common reports for all donors would be useful. The European Commission has begun this for its member governments in some selected African countries in 1984. Clearly sensitive political judgments of field staff would continue to arrive separately by cable, occasionally classified. Nevertheless common agreement and reporting from the field to donors and international bodies would be a major improvement in the current information system. Without collaboration few donors have the staff currently to provide regular and comprehensive information. Consequently the major factors affecting the food policy and food aid needs of recipient countries comes to the attention of policy-makers in inconsistent, irregular fashion. A significant upgrading and systemization of field reporting through donor and recipient collaboration is possible and highly desirable.

Multi-donor Missions. In some particular cases where a field working group is not established and emergency or other compelling conditions seem to have arisen, multi-donor missions would be a second way to get more timely and credible data. This would usually follow a request that a mission be sent to a particular country to assess their immediate needs. The FAO has undertaken to organize "multi-donor" missions to aid in assessments and to enhance the prospects that donors will be committed to respond to reports prepared by a mission.

Participation by donors and support for such missions have been disappointing

according to FAO's office of special relief activities.(9) Results of such missions could, in principle, be of general benefit to the donor community as well as to the particular recipient. There are, however, several problems with the multi-donor ad hoc mission concept. First, there may be competent officials of bilateral donors already resident in the country whose reports are already considered adequate by donors. Such officials would probably have misgivings about visitors from their own country. Second, such multi-donor missions spend no more than two weeks in a recipient country and while there are subject to considerable scheduling by the recipient country, usually in an effort to make its case. Although the effort to present the "problem" is quite understandable, the result is that such missions are often caught up in a dynamic that decreases their ability to have a perspective on the "facts." Unless mission members are familiar with the economic, political and food system characteristics of the recipient country, the particular needs, especially emergency needs are not subject to much checking. There may be cases where this is the best way to highlight the uniqueness and special quality of emergency needs and to get action underway quickly. Indeed personnel stationed in these countries often are reluctant (as sometimes are recipient country personnel) to admit that an emergency has arisen.

There are a number of reasons to hesitate to have many such missions. Participation may be decided on non-technical considerations. There is seldom available personnel in the central headquarters of food aid agencies to participate in multi-donor missions in any event. Emergency assessments, therefore, are more likely to occur when the emergency has a generalized concern for the development agency as a whole, rather than simply its food aid component, and when personnel are available from regional or technical areas rather than the food aid office. The role of food aid policy makers with respect to multi-donor missions would be largely to monitor the terms of reference and degree of obligation that might arise and to assess the general utility of the undertaking with respect to improving the

specification of timing and size of needs for food aid. There will surely be instances in which a multi-donor mission would be an appropriate undertaking. It will be helpful to have food aid officials regularly involved in specifying the conditions when it would be helpful since food aid is the most frequently sought resource in emergency situations. When a multi-donor mission seems to be shaping up, it would be appropriate for officials in the food aid agencies of the major donors to consult to formulate a common set of desiderata as to what the mission will address regarding food aid needs. Since multi-donor missions occur only infrequently, in instances where the local staff of donors is not in the position to assess needs in a critical period, the occasion for consultation on this issue would also be infrequent.

Sharing of Country Reports. Cables concerning food aid matters that are not classified sent from the field to the headquarters of a donor organization could be shared. This might be done automatically. For example, in Rome most donors maintain an office dealing with food and agricultural issues through which pass a large number of cables detailing individual country situations. Such cables could be shared either directly with interested officials in Brussels, Ottawa and Washington or sent through their relevant missions in Rome. Upon reflection it seems clear that automatically sharing all unclassified cable traffic would not only create a great information burden on officials, but also would increase the burden on the government undertaking the sharing. For example if the United States undertook to share cables in order to facilitate the expanded information flow, it would have substantial sorting responsibility and administrative cost. Except for these practical concerns, there seems to be no reason why unclassified cables could not be shared among donors. Although an automatic sharing of such cables would expand the paper flow more rapidly than it could be digested or would improve the flow of understanding, occasional use of this practice is in order. The option suggested favors cable sharing for a limited time for specific countries. This

practice should be understood to be a normal rather than extraordinary undertaking. Most often this would occur following phone calls from desk or regional officials to their counterpart in another agency's headquarters.

Coordination of International Reports. Information from the field feeds into the the various international reports. Important among these are the reports by the FAO on the early warning and cereal import requirements and by the WFP and FAO on emergencies. These reports, prepared in Rome and circulated on a confidential basis, are more heavily relied upon by donor agencies with relatively small staffs, such as the European Community, than by the United States with its large staff. Over the last decade these reports have become increasingly detailed and timely. Their impetus, arising in part from the World Food Conference of 1974, is substantial.

There are aspects of these reports, nevertheless, which can be improved. This observation reflects criticisms or disappointments expressed by donor officials in the course of this study. In particular the early warning information does not usually provide information on stock levels, price movements or policy measures. Such information would be desirable and could be produced using the approach sketched out earlier for a multi-donor working group report. Furthermore, the Cereal Import Requirements report expresses needed imports of food aid using an algorithm designed to estimate needs based on an assumption of a static nutritional intake by a population. It has been revised to make it more serviceable for some. (10) The conclusions reached by applying this algorithm, nevertheless, have not always proved satisfactory to donors. This report does offer more timely analysis than the longer range and more complicated assessment by the United States Department of Agriculture in its report on World Food Aid Needs and Availabilities (FANA).

Developing agreement on a list of desired data and procedures for use in international reporting systems would be an important next step of field data

improvement. The current African emergency reporting system, developed somewhat in concert by the Food and Agricultural Organization and the World Food Program, is in fact a significant improvement in scope and timeliness over past reporting that international agencies have provided. Nevertheless a problem still exists with respect to the FAO "import needs assessment" based on this data. The FAO's estimates of the "gap" to be filled by food aid has been a troublesome estimate for donor countries; some use it in calculating their food aid allocations, while others are suspicious of the conclusions. Often disagreements have arisen over conclusions implied by the estimates rather than over the basic information describing the conditions of a country. Since the factual basis of reports is considered trustworthy, no serious barriers prevent international agency officials from working more closely with officials of major donors in each recipient country in the preparation of basic field reports. This occurs in several cases already.

Using common field reports, where possible, international bodies and donor agencies could still make their own needs assessments. Assessments might be made by officials in the recipient countries, by those at headquarters, or both. The European Commission and Canada have small bureaucratic and professional staffs; it would be hard for them to undertake independent analysis of such data. The United States with its larger resources both within AID and the Department of Agricultural's Economic Research Service has maintained a capacity for analytical work based on field reports. Often analysis entails formal economic modeling.

Models have not always produced timely or effective conclusions for guiding food aid policy, as we have noted. In the United States, for example, the FANA report has a professional quality, but it has not been heavily used and has had a fairly small impact. Efforts to improve data collection and analytical capabilities for food aid needs have been the subject of meetings among officials in several countries and within the WFP and FAO since at least 1974. The continuing goal is to make existing systems and categories of analysis more useful. Improvements in the

FANA are under review in the United States, and a meeting to discuss technical aspects of the FAO cereals import need assessment is planned for 1985. Without difficulty shared information from field reports can allow more frequent updates of these analytical reports.

If the FAO organizes a working level group to discuss the import requirements calculations and other reports prepared by the FAO, donor country support is warranted. The basis for progress seems to rest on potential quid pro quos between the existing institutionalized routines of the FAO and the concerns which have troubled donor countries. Major donors, in responding to the FAO, could use meetings to discuss estimates of food aid needs. These could productively seek more common understanding about "need" estimates. Perhaps the algorithms used to generate needs should be subject to discussion and recommendations by donors and the use of coordinated field reports used in developing these considered. This will allow a more complete and open examination of the issues that proved troublesome in and clarify the basis upon which donors would be best able to utilize this information. It might also reduce the discrepancies between FAO estimates and those generated inside donors. At times when the United States has had different figures for African countries than the cereal import requirements showed, discrepancies appear to be often a result of differences in the arrival time of information. The differences nevertheless have caused concern in the U.S. ad hoc emergency group appointed to deal with responses to the African famine.

The FAO figures represent a substantial effort. There is no doubt as to the intellectual integrity which produces them. It is disappointing that the product of this effort has not been uniformly welcomed and found useful. One explanation for this is that the FAO figures have been given political prominence by those seeking an expansion of food aid. For some donor officials this has constituted unwelcome pressure.

The purpose of an international working group should be, therefore, (1) to

minimize the conflicts over "facts" and (2) to increase the understanding of the "need" estimates. This could be done through the use of common field reports and careful attention to timing in the first instance and through a reexamination of the algorithms and purposes of needs estimates so that donor officials would have a clearer idea of the meaning of particular figures. Donor countries, in return for a willingness for the FAO to redesign aspects of their existing reporting systems should be prepared to give increased attention to the results.

A promising proposal is to separate food aid "needed" for a particular country into the regular (targeted for projects or standard deficits) needs and extraordinary (or emergency) needs.(11) A proposed approach for preparing needs estimates is outlined in Appendix D. Successful outcomes along these lines will depend upon the results of detailed discussions that need to take place. One or probably two meetings of a working group should uncover what progress is possible. Leadership can be expected from the FAO's office for food aid data, while the preparation of a series of African emergency reports provides a precedent for substantial improvement in timeliness and completeness of international reports. These developments favor an improved utility to food aid donors and recipients of the FAO reports.

#### Standard Accounting of Food Aid

Each of the three principal donors has evolved its own system of recording its food aid actions. Each keeps track of such basic data as: proposed allocations, the formal decision and contractual arrangements, and details about the actual quantity shipped, its arrival and its subsequent use. These accounting systems reflect exigencies faced by the different agencies over their history. Each system has been, until recently, largely a paper and pencil operation. There is a substantial effort required each time a report with special, unique categories is

requested. Such requests of international bodies occur annually from OECD, semi-annually from the IWC and periodically from other bodies. Since reformatting information each time has been difficult, reports from donors have not always been exactly comparable or complete. It is usual therefore to find information in international reports referring to different periods collapsed together, and in some cases missing completely. The result is that various differences among donors lead to anomalies in international records of food aid among the IWC, OECD and the FAO.

(12)

Two steps could improve this situation and provide for more complete and accurate information to be circulated among donors promptly. First, more uniformity in the records kept by individual donors could be achieved. Second, the use of common reporting systems would be desirable.

Uniform Accounting for Food Aid. All donors and several international bodies, as indicated earlier, have some system of accounting for the food aid flows which they undertake or on which they report. Also, as noted earlier, these undertakings do not follow identical procedures or formats. As a result the ability of donors to share common information is reduced and the value of collections of information on world food aid flows is either incomplete or has inconsistencies in it.

In the last few years the availability of microcomputers and appropriate software for use in accounting and management systems gives donor governments and international agencies an additional rationale to redesign their record keeping operation. Indeed in 1984 several agencies were reworking or expanding their information systems.

One option to expand the similarity of data files and the ease with which it can be shared among donors would be to establish a common data specification format for the most basic entries into food aid accounting. The goal would be to specify tonnages of commodities in common ways (frequently already the case) and to use the same criteria to record observations about food aid flows. Thus, for example, where

donors have a public announcement of intended allocations, as the United States does, this would be one point which a common category of information could be computed for all donors even if some donors would not be able to share planned allocations as far in advance as the US (see Appendix A). A second point would include the date and particulars of a negotiated arrangement between donor and recipient. A third point would include the actual date of shipping and tonnage sent and a fourth point would be arrival and exact tonnage received. After the point of commitment information on food aid transactions should be relatively transparent and its reporting straight forward. If data were on a monthly basis, monthly reports could be easily shared on an automatic and routine basis among donors. The updating and correcting of information during the course of implementing a food aid transaction should prove a simple administrative task. There are some definitional issues concerning what should be counted as food aid. These too could be addressed in designing a more common data specification format. One possibility for a format is laid out in Appendix E.

The various phases in which food aid moves, i.e. from (1) a provisional budget planning exercise to (2) a formal agreement between parties to (3) the concrete shipping and arrival of the food itself are essential components in the basic accounting system for food aid. In general this level of detail should suffice. A common format should contain these three steps. In each donor, however, there will be need for additional detail in order to satisfy internal reporting requirements or internal administrative needs that have arisen over time. Ideally this additional level of detail can be added to particular donor countries without requiring everyone to record the level of detail that any one donor records. The proposed goal is a data matrix for each donor recording each month recipients, commodities and valuations. Food aid amounts would be recorded as provisionally planned, formally committed, shipped and actually received. Clearly commodity sizes and the commodity itself may change over time as provisionally planned allocations might be

reallocated for a variety of reasons. At any point, however, it would be possible to review where the provisioning stood. Once actions had been completed the historical record would be reasonably complete and accurate.

In order to design the common (or relatively common) format to be used by donors for their administrative systems a meeting among technical staff would be required. This might or might not be facilitated by an international agency. Preliminary discussions are appropriate to explore the receptiveness of key officials and these need to take place informally in a bilateral or small group context.

A meeting could review the accounting practices of various donors, with a view towards identifying existing commonality, and wherever feasible, standardizing to one format their accounting procedures. As mentioned before, each donor will have to retain its capacity to generate reports that conform to their budgetary year, their parliamentary or legislative reporting needs and other internal desiderata for administrative accounting. These uses have been institutionalized within their particular bureaucracy. Nevertheless a set of basic information, using a formula that specifies, for example, a series of specific month-by-month items would certainly capture the major facets of each food aid transactions now recorded by major donors.

The undertaking described above, while not extraordinary in its dimensions or unusual compared to practices in many large organizations, would be difficult to be carried out by the existing staff in the three major donors reviewed here. In each donor those responsible for the task of accounting for food aid actions are sorely pressed by their current work. While it should be their responsibility to think through and design the basic formats and software requirements, it would be appropriate for either additional staff to be provided for the preparation of the software recommended here or for such work to be done through external contracts. After the start up phase these new procedures should impose no new burden and could

simplify some tasks.

Common Reporting. Food aid donors could provide more uniform reports of their food aid actions to each other and to the OECD, the CSD, the IWC and the WFP. Unfortunately international bodies have different reporting forms. These create substantial burdens on food aid staff or on development agency officials outside a food aid unit. Some staff must rework internal figures to satisfy reporting requirements. The IWC, for example, uses a different calendar basis for recording food aid reports than does the OECD. If the option to develop more common data specifications and in particular to develop a month-by-month system for accounting were developed and embedded in the routines used by the bilateral donors (as well as perhaps by the WFP), it should then be possible for international bodies to use a report already prepared by the various bilateral donors to extract information and reformat it for their purposes. Alternatively donors could use fairly simple computer programs to prepare a report from the standard data base that conformed to the specifications requested by the international body. In such cases where the calendar year was to serve as a basis for food aid flows and the food aid was to be reported as a transaction at the time when it reached a recipient country, the resulting definition of food aid in a report could be more consistent across all countries and would require less work recalculating data.

Discussions with personnel currently responsible for these reports, a review of forms issued by the OECD and an examination of the final reports prepared for organizations such as the FAO and the IWC indicate that considerable duplication of effort occurs. Efficiencies as well as greater accuracy could be gained through more common reporting. Standard computer routines would simply reformat the basic data that donors had kept in a common form to meet each reporting requirement. Different computer instructions could produce information for purposes such as marketing year reports, fiscal year reports and regional reports in a fairly routine and quick fashion. In addition, because basic data could be stored on disks or made

accessible "on-line", it could be quickly shared. Some information could not be entered into the shared part of the management data until after it was official, although donors could continue to alert one another informally about expected allocations.

The interests of donors would be served by this step. First, it should aid policy decision-making through better ability to establish trade-offs in allocations. Second, it reduces the gap between those closest to information vis-a-vis generalists ultimately responsible for policy. Third, it reduces the chance that an unjustified interpretation will be given to a food aid action. To illustrate this last point recall that food aid is regularly considered in terms of whether or not it is an increase or decrease from the previous year, whether it represents a variation from trend, whether it represents a different fraction of total imports, and whether it fills some or all of a nutritional gap. All such calculations require good historical records of the previous provision of food aid. A review of the documents available when decisions are being shaped within a food aid bureau or in an inter-agency process suggests that the full historical contexts are frequently not available to decision makers. This is unfortunate.

Greater commonality in information systems as described above could result in concerted reporting through a single uniform method. Then the FAO, OECD, IWC and other groups could publish identical food aid figures. This would require some international agreement on a standard year, standard commodity grouping, common pricing and other common descriptions for the food aid exchanges. Agreement would require at least a sense that the benefits of changing accounting practices outweighed costs. Although this is not a priority concern, to further this goal a donor government might table a proposal to assess the merits of standardization at a CFA meeting.

More frequent and more regularized consultations among donors would facilitate information sharing. Prior to CFA meetings, and perhaps prior to other relevant meetings, such as the FAC and ones periodically organized by the FAO, and the OECD, greater exchange of views would also be helpful to realizing shared objectives.

Arenas for Donors Interactions. The arenas in which donors can exchange information, both bilaterally and multilaterally, have already been reviewed. The attractiveness of different arenas and mechanisms for consultation are assessed now with a view to locating the best mix of ways to consult.

Bilateral consultations are a regular feature of international life, and occur at both political and "working" levels of development organizations. Conditions for consultations vary among pairs of donors, including their frequency and formality. There are, for example, as mentioned earlier informal bilateral meetings on food aid issues between the United States and Canada: the same is true among members of the European Community.

Multilateral meetings are the other means for donor exchanges. Both ad hoc and regular meetings of this type have occurred over the last decade. Ad hoc meetings have occurred at seminars held by the University of Sussex in 1982, 1983 and 1984, and by the World Food Program in 1983. In addition other meetings of an ad hoc kind have been sponsored by the Agricultural Development Council - a food aid seminar on Asia in 1981 and a similar seminar on Africa in 1982.

Formal multilateral occasions constitute a difficult arena for donor exchanges because these require more prior intra-governmental consultation and often involve more complex, multi-issue bargaining, both substantive and rhetorical. Historically in the UN system Group B countries have met to prepare a position prior to formal meetings. Since UN diplomats are responsible for UN activities and not bilateral programs, these meetings often did not bring program managers together. In any event the use of such pre-meeting consultations or even consultations during the

meetings has not been a substantial activity for donor food aid officials in dealing with international institutions in the last few years. Furthermore consultations regarding the response to the needs of a particular country or area, for example emergency relief to particular African countries, has also not been a frequent undertaking except when it occurred in the field.

To review briefly, the current institutionalized multilateral settings include: a semi-annual meeting of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programs of the World Food Program in Rome; a semi-annual meeting of the Food Aid Committee for the Food Aid Convention associated with the International Wheat Council in London; a monthly meeting of the Committee on Surplus Disposal (CSD), a subcommittee of the FAO's Commodities Committee in Washington D.C.; and occasional meetings of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, most recently the Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) November, 1984, meeting on Food Aid and Development Cooperation in Paris. (13)

In the 1970's, as a major decline occurred between the size of the food aid transactions in international trade compared to the size of commercial transactions, the role and significance of the CSD similarly declined. Food aid currently constitutes approximately 4% of the world's grain trade while in the 1950's and 1960's it was between 25 and 40%. As a result, the monthly meeting of the CSD are of minor concern to most donors or governments that belong to it. These meetings occasionally discuss proposed food aid transactions that prove cumbersome to one or another exporting country. Most transactions, however, are routinely accepted and the few that prove to be a source of friction are often resolved either informally outside the CSD among the two or three countries concerned or are simply passed along for resolution to some other arena. (14) While in principle the CSD reviews all food aid transactions prior to their formal agreement, establishes usual marketing requirements (UMRs), and resolves potential disputes, it is in fact a minor and specialized institution. Although it is stable, it does not have the

institutional resources or platform to undertake much activity that would enhance donor information sharing, particularly on issues of end use. Furthermore the actual CSD meetings, because they are relatively specialized to diplomatic and trade concerns, do not pull together food aid management officials. The CSD, therefore, has the lowest prospect and priority for enhanced donor communication among existing multi-lateral arenas.

Individual country consultative groups, consortia, and round tables organized by the World Bank, the UNDP and the EEC exist for a large number of food aid recipients. These tend to meet on fairly regular cycles although not identical for every country or region and there is the possibility of special meetings in instances where emergency conditions develop, as in Zaire in 1979. Sometimes, as with Bank sponsored groups, a secretariat and institutional structure for regular meetings is provided to assist donor and recipient officials. In Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Sri Lanka, Kenya and others in which food aid plays a prominent role annual meetings help coordinate development activities. In addition regional groups exist. Following the common food shortages and famine threatening conditions of 1973-74 in the Sahelian region, the Club du Sahel was formed in Paris as an adjunct of the OECD. In 1979 the French initiated Cooperation for Development in Africa (CDA). Their purpose is to enhance donor coordination and cooperative development in Africa.

All these country and regional groups, whether strictly a World Bank or UNDP institutional undertaking or not, offer a potential forum for food aid coordination as well. Generally, however, food aid gets little attention in these. Bangladesh is a major exception. Without participation of food aid officials along with officials with a sector competence in food and agriculture issues, this is unlikely to change.

Continuing the review of multi-lateral settings brings us to the World Bank. Unless the Bank develops greater interest in and expertise on food aid it will not

normally offer a congenial and meaningful arena. Donor officials brought together under Bank consultative groups seldom have the detailed understanding of food aid to advance information sharing and communication among donors. The Bank can play a constructive role, as discussed earlier in country level working groups. The report by the World Bank on Sustained Development in Sub-Saharan Africa (1984) notes that the weakness of uncoordinated aid is "increasingly recognized." It further urges donors and governments to work together, modifying aid coordination in both "form and substance" so that details in specific areas such as integrating food aid into domestic agricultural programs are reviewed by sectoral aid coordination groups. The report's view of food aid is rather positive, noting that the dangers of aid as a disincentive threatening the food self-sufficiency goal for Africa are as great for food aid as for "aid in general." (14) The views of the Bank, coupled with recent efforts of the UN—the UNDP and the WFP—to expand its coordination role, auger well for the prospect of enhanced food aid coordination in Africa. Both the UN and the Bank have aimed their new efforts at individual country-level aid coordination. As venues for broader consultation their limitations discussed earlier remain.

Food aid is also not given major attention in the OECD DAC setting. With a small secretariat, professional support for donor exchanges is limited. The Development Assistance Committee and the Development Center can provide an intellectual framework and locale for ad hoc meetings, but do not have the mandate in the constellation of organizations to create a permanent venue for food aid information sharing. This would require establishing a special DAC working group with some permanent staff assigned to it. Such a step has been taken occasionally as when donors sought to coordinate positions during the CIEC talks.

This review establishes that arenas do exist to facilitate greater communication among donors. The current situation, however, is not fully satisfactory for the kinds of consultations identified as desirable. For example,

the African emergency and the difficulties donors have had in responding to conflicting estimates of need were not adequately addressed by these. A major issue, then, is whether new and more productive donor exchanges might be achieved within existing arenas or whether new undertakings are needed, presumably requiring only modest start-up costs. Recognizing that institutional innovation will make claims on the scarce time of officials, it is recommended that, with one exception, no new institutional arenas be created--certainly not before further efforts to use existing ones have been made.

It is the judgment of this report that creatively reworking the agenda, functions and/or style of some of the existing institutional arrangements would serviceably meet the felt need among donor officials for greater information sharing and exchange. A major consideration is that the "reworking" strive for informality in the exchanges that occur, especially if travel and face-to-face meetings are entailed. Since many formal multi-lateral meetings, such as those of the CFA and the IWC's Food Aid Committee, have an institutionalized, well prepared pattern of work, little opportunity exists currently for candid and spontaneous interaction on substantive issues. Furthermore, often the most appropriate officials, that is those with leadership responsibility and a grasp of food aid details, do not even come together at these meetings. The meetings of these two forums, however, are at least plausible occasions on which the relevant officials from the donors could come together. It would make more sense, however, for such meetings to be held just prior or following these meetings at another venue. In addition, an OECD working group could be organized for a two-three year period to address particular issues.

Alternatively, or in addition, since in 1985 a "critical mass" of interest and organizational impetus exists, a special consortia on food aid to Africa could be created. This could be an adjunct to an existing group, for instance the CDA, which is the least structured and could take advantage of the special efforts of the FAO and WFP in African data gathering. A consortia could begin to lay the basis for

longer term effective food aid to Africa through permanent coordination, less bureaucratic duplication and contingency planning.

Meetings of Senior Officials To assist management and information flows an annual meeting of the senior food aid officials in donors should be held. One purpose of this "summit" meeting would be to plan some of the undertakings outlined in this study. Such planning will require discussion and eventual agreement. Informal, relatively ad hoc meetings held once a year could address and plan for a number of collaborative activities.

A second purpose would be to allow the senior officials in the food aid organizations of the major donors to develop working relationships. They would familiarize themselves with each other and with their orientations and understandings. This would allow more experienced officials to share some of their background and experience with newly appointed officials. An effective network of senior officials could thus be maintained.

A third purpose for meeting would be to enhance preparations for international organization meetings such as the CFA and the IWC's food aid committee. It is not necessary and perhaps not ever desirable that a common position among major donors be reached prior to or during the course of international meetings. Certainly on some issues major donors are very likely to have different perspectives and take different positions. Nevertheless there seems to be considerable interest to be served among all donors in clarifying in advance of the meetings the positions they expect to take on key issues and where their positions are virtually identical to discuss further the kinds of undertakings that would most advance their common interests. Meetings to discover and further explore the kinds of positions and interests shared by the major donors prior to international meetings would be difficult to schedule for busy officials. It seems most plausible therefore that, since the purpose of such meetings would not be to shift or change the donor governments positions in advance of the meeting, that plans be made so that the food

aid officials representing food aid agencies come together for a meeting prior to or very near the opening of the international meetings which they are attending. For meetings such as the FAC of the International Wheat Council it would be appropriate that the internal procedures of some member states be changed to allow development agency officials to be represented on the delegation. In the absence of such a change, the IWC meetings would be of little relevance and the prospect for using such a meeting, as suggested, to serve information ends is also low.

Ad hoc meetings among major donors might also occur in trying to plan a response to particular proposals. For example, if the FAO proposes a multi-donor mission to report on the situation and needs in some country, say Ghana, the donors might find it useful to have a quick ad hoc meeting among three or four officials in order to clarify their response and to work out desiderata for such a multi-donor mission. In dealing with other particular problems such as a monitoring of the grain market restructuring exercise in Mali for example or estimating the size of emergency food aid needs in particular countries, the relevant individuals in the major donors might first use informal phone conversations to share their understanding of the problems faced and major issues that need to be resolved or clarified and finally, where appropriate, schedule a quick meeting to resolve certain issues and to put a timetable around the policy decisions. In this way officials can help each other press for decisions by others, either in a recipient country and/or within their own government.

Working Level Coordinator. A second change would be to make it easier for working-level officials to have informal face-to-face meetings and to develop telephone consultation. Thereby they would have a better understanding of the plans and public position which other agencies are preparing. Such consultations require some knowledge about the existence and likely cooperativeness of counter-part officials in other countries. This alternative is a cost effective means towards enhanced information sharing. An informal network among food aid managers would

institutionalize consulting, and do so without invoking a need to use formal channels or to develop official positions. Rather, it will be necessary for some officials simply to come together from time-to-time to meet one another. This is particularly true since there is a regular turnover of officials in the food aid administration of the principal donors. Thus for officials at the working level, both both within the special food aid sections and among regional and desk officers responsible for food aid a supportive framework to maintain a network needs to emerge. Elaborate or large-scale meetings are not required, however. Some other supportive steps are simply the information and phone numbers for other donors. Appendix B, for example, provides telephone and address listings for some officials. This could be updated occasionally. Such simple directories and a newsletter that highlighted relevant scholarly research along with reports on major developments and personnel changes in food aid staff would facilitate collegial sentiments. Such modest undertakings encourages officials to become acquainted with their counterparts in other countries. Officials in a network can develop rapport by phone that enables them to cross-check information with each other and to provide informal explanations about where food aid decisions stand within their organization.

#### Common Training and Conferences

The last step reviewed that could advance donors' interests is through establishing common educational opportunities for management professionals. Currently each of the three major donors has a distinct organizational career track for professionals. In each, food aid personnel follow patterns and have skills that fit the structures and constraints of larger governmental agencies. Joint training and conferences would enhance the performance of officials who move into in food aid positions.

Training. Under existing procedures there is little opportunity for specialized training to develop staff competency. In the European Community and in the World Food Program a second bind exists in that rotation of staff between the field and home office is not regularized. As a result the experience of officials is less than is possible and perhaps desirable. Two remedies exist: (1) to enhance the professional training of officials, particularly by providing opportunities for them in multi-donor sponsored training activities, and (2) to alter procedures so that rotation between field and home is more possible.

In order to implement joint training on a regular basis, some kind of commonly funded and regularly coordinated undertaking would be most effective. It is possible for existing exercises to continue, such as the seminars organized at Sussex which have been voluntary and self-funding. Nevertheless the basis for the Sussex seminars seems institutionally weak. It would be more desirable to have a permanently funded unit which could, in consultation with various donor officials, plan and undertake joint training exercises. The International Food Policy Research Institute offers one such vehicle through its planned food aid unit. Since IFPRI does not itself undertake training exercises, its role would be largely to identify sites and leadership for joint training activities rather than to expend funds upon its own staff and personnel as the principal suppliers of training activities. The rotation of sites and personnel would be appropriate in order to meet different needs and to respect the interest of donors in having some training in their own countries. Training sessions should be rotated among several locations, therefore, and use instructors drawn from different countries. This could be done reasonably well over a three year period. The selection of staff to attend training sessions would be done by each donor, with a view toward improving competencies in mutually agreed upon subjects, for instance shipping logistics, food policy analysis or emergency feeding requirements.

An example of format, organization, and costs for a joint training exercise

will provide a more concrete proposal for donors to consider. Apperdix F contains details of such a proposal for a two week training course. A two week course is suggested for maximum educational impact combined with minimum absence of officials from their posts. In two weeks it would be possible for each participant to work on two subjects, as well as benefit from discussions at several plenary topics. The training exercise could handle a variable number of participants, but an ideal number used in the specific proposal is twenty-four.

There is some difficulty in moving personnel between field and home in the United States and Canada, but generally over the course of an individual's career there is substantial opportunity, and even requirement, that field experience be a part of the career patterr. Headquarters' officials would desirably have had field experience, especially experience with food aid and food systems in recipient countries. In both the United States and Canada there are several instances of intermediate and senior level officials who have had precisely this kind of experience in their career. In the Europear Community and the World Food Program and perhaps in other donors such as Japan, this is less the case. In these circumstances procedures which would allow for development of greater experience for "home" staff are recommended. There are basically two rationales for this conclusion. First, overseas experience provides references through which field reports concerning food aid needs and ancillary information can be more concretely understood by officials. Second, overseas experience, particularly in instances where there are opportunities to work with officials from other donor agencies, allows food aid staff over the course of their career to develop a network of relationships which can be extremely helpful in their work at headquarters. They develop both a feel for the outlook and operating procedures of the other donors through this field experience as well as particular contacts which they may be able to utilize on an informal basis in order to achieve quicker and more effective decision making in the implementation of food aid allocations, particularly in

periods of stress.

In the European Community, overseas posts are not normally held by permanent career staff of the Commission. Thus Community employees whose responsibilities include those of monitoring, evaluating and recommending food aid uses overseas do not regularly rotate back to Brussels. In Brussels an organization specialized in preparing and supporting field staff has developed. Delegations are composed perhaps 20% by career staff seconded from Brussels and the others are Commission employees under contract. Neither the European Community nor Canada has a strict counter-part to the United States' "Food-for-Peace Officer," a position at many overseas US AID missions. Although technically this post is under a regional bureau, the post's occupant is specialized to monitoring and evaluating food aid projects (usually under Title II programs). Often, he/she has an allegiance and a special relationship to the Bureau for Food-for-Peace and Voluntary Assistance within AID. American personnel generally have career status within a common bureaucratic framework. In a normal course of events they rotate between assignments in Washington and overseas posts. Transfers into and out of the food aid posts occur frequently, although there is a cadre of permanent Food-For-Peace positions, primarily supportive staff. Senior officials expect staff development and training is needed and is appropriate for the AID professional staff in food aid. The CIDA system of career development is analogous to this but less specialized than that of the United States. To the extent possible, planned career movement for food aid officials will desirably include field positions as well as experience at headquarters.

Regardless of these differences, none of the three donor agencies provides special training focussed on food systems and food policy. Little formal training in the kinds of issues that food aid raises, particularly those arising in the last decade from efforts to orient food aid to be a development resource and to work toward prevention of famine, is provided to either field staff or those at

headquarters. What learning takes place is ad hoc. Even when officials have some formal training it tends to be in conventional agricultural economics, which is only a part of the relevant educational background. To assist the implementation of food strategies or food for development objectives people in home and overseas assignments should have not only management skills and an intellectual understanding of development processes, but also a grasp of food policy, grain storage and handling, the nature and preferred responses to emergencies, and other food aid special concerns. This grasp could be acquired either before entering a post or through in-service training. None of the three major donors, however, has by itself a sufficiently large number of career staff, in permanent or temporary assignments, to warrant developing a special training unit or program to do this. There are, nevertheless, in total among the three donors, and even more so if other agencies, such as the World Food Program, Japan, and Australia are added, a significant number of personnel for whom training opportunities would be appropriate. A step for enhancing donor effectiveness therefore, would be the establishment of common training activities, including short courses, seminars and specialized conferences to increase the understanding of the history, uses, and misuses of food aid. In addition, attending training activities together should facilitate subsequent cooperation among officials.

The University of Sussex's seminars over the last three years have been evaluated as valuable by several participants, though in each instance for somewhat different reasons. They were essentially not training sessions but were geared to more senior and experienced officials. For those familiar with issues the opportunity to develop cross-agency relationships has been rewarding. In addition to Sussex other educational institutions and research sites could appropriately provide the kind of common training suggested here. For example, the Food Research Institute at Stanford University, and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) are two other resources that could facilitate training. (15)

IFPRI's staff would be appropriately used only for short seminars and conferences lasting no more than two weeks. European and Canadian institutions could also serve as potential hosts.

The establishment of a regular cycle for seminars and training sessions would be appropriate. Once this was begun, officials in food aid posts in the donor agencies should be regularly afforded opportunities to attend training courses and conferences, and as early as possible in their tenure as policy shapers.

Conferences on Important Topics: The African Crisis. Conferences will be most easily accepted on an ad hoc basis. The crisis in Africa in 1983-84 has resulted in a number of adaptive responses. Donors have been motivated to increase their food aid levels and to heighten their capacity to respond promptly to emergencies. Voluntary agencies have attempted to develop improved policies towards food production and emergency feeding. International agencies such as the FAO and World Food Program have expanded their staff and their reporting in order to facilitate coordination of food aid information and improve its utilization. It would be desirable to review the various undertakings that have resulted from the emergency and to attempt to institutionalize those responses which have continuing merit. One procedure for this would be to have a conference focused upon the undertakings of different organizations. Such a conference could pull together recommendations from agencies based on the elements of their experience which were worthwhile and should be continued.

Such a stock-taking conference would appropriately involve voluntary agencies as well as bilateral donors and international agencies. All played an important role in the international food crisis. Recipient country officials would also be involved since their assessment of the activities of the donor agencies, as well as of their own undertakings would be useful. Improvement of recipient's capacity to relate effectively with donors in the utilization of food aid is important in the overall effort to learn from and use experiences which occurred in response to the

African crisis. One experience worth institutionalizing is the improved format and timeliness achieved in reporting the emergency by the WFP/FAO efforts. Other experience worth reviewing is that garnered in transportation and marketing of the food supplies, the role played by different recipient government agencies such as ministries of agriculture, rehabilitation and relief, finance, and health.

In addition to a conference on the African crisis, other food aid concerns are appropriate for a multi-donor sponsored conference. These include periodic country or regional assessments. Conferences might be held in conjunction with World Bank consultative group meetings. In some regards special meetings, timed to follow World Bank reviews and involving both donor and recipient country officials would be ideal. Such meetings could entail a general review of the food policy and food aid effectiveness within a particular country. Currently, donor officials' assessment visits to countries such as Bangladesh and Ghana are not coordinated. As a result recipients have to deal inefficiently with a stream of visitors and donor information sharing opportunities are lost.

An example of this type of small conference would be to organize a meeting to review the grain restructuring exercise in Mali. This project uses significant food aid from several donors, as well as technical assistance from the World Bank. The justification for the project was promoted by a set of new policy initiatives in the food sector supported by some donors. This national "project" would be an appropriate focus for a multi-donor sponsored conference, probably 1986. Another topic for a small conference would be an assessment of the trade-offs between "project" and "program" aid. Choices between these approaches interrelate to the distinction between bilateral and multilateral channels. Such an evaluative conference would aim to analyze the constraints and variables that determined relative success or failure of projects or programs in particular countries, especially in light of the policy framework of the country. A third topic for a conference would be issues of logistics, especially within countries, such as in

Ethiopia. In many countries significant barriers to food distribution exist, both physical and political. Conferences should avoid attempts to distribute praise or blame for particular activities. For example, if insufficient food aid occurs in a case, systemic rather than national or personal factors that account for it should be the focus of attention.

Consultative meetings focusing on one or more countries are also useful as learning tools. A major short-coming of governments has been identified as the "failure to learn". Amazingly, in case after case, governments seem to repeat "mistakes." For example, as a general proposition significant increases in food prices - over 15% - precipitously announced by governments are subsequently followed by costly political protests and outbreaks of violence. Gradual changes in Sri Lanka and Jamaica avoided the most expensive popular protests. Precipitous ones tried in Egypt, Tunisia and the Dominican Republic proved costly. What explains this failure to "learn" in countries experiencing food riots in the last decade? Similarly, one finds a repetition of the problems of isolation and disregard of the poorest areas in cases of famine relief. Problems in policy dialogue, project development and virtually the entire range of activities in which the end use of food aid is an important consideration provide further instances of slow or no learning.

Multi-donor sponsored evaluation conferences could be mere "talk-fests", of course. Compared to such wastes, sponsored research to evaluate a particular project or undertaking, whether later tabled at a particular conference or not, would be more valuable. The proposal is here for well-designed meetings aimed to advance the undertakings of officials. Well-designed meetings would involve officials who have first hand experience with the issues at hand. Normally, they would not require "academic" research prepared in advance. Rather, selected professionals familiar with the concerns to be raised would join with experienced food aid officials. Their goal in most cases would be to understand, and to

articulate through a conference report, ways for better coping with the problems encountered. Such a conference could also fulfill the oversight function that otherwise legislative bodies have increasingly tried to undertake. Legislative bodies seldom have an international reach and are frequently ill equipped to receive candid reports. For bureaucrats public candor is often costly, even when they themselves may genuinely be puzzled over the causes of ineffective performance in a particular situation. Conferences, not open to the public, would be better designed to meet the corrective and learning functions of governments.

In summary, the proposed multidonor sponsored conferences or small meetings would be oriented toward problem solving and include an off-the-record rule. Normally they would focus upon a region or upon chronic problems in the provision of food aid. Some conferences would seek an atmosphere conducive to learning, trying to discover common interpretations of data and a reconciliation of misunderstanding among participants. (16) They would need to be carefully planned. Suitable preparations could create an atmosphere within which trust and candor prevailed. The product of such conferences could include recommendations which donor agencies might find serviceable for administrative and organizational activities, and also would provide opportunities for individual officials to interact, many of whom will continue to have responsibilities for food aid. Thus meetings afford the chance for both learning and for network cultivation among officials from various donor countries and organizations.

#### 4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Four possible steps for donor country undertakings have been described: (1) establishment of collaborative reporting on conditions in recipient countries, (2) development of a common formula for recording food aid data, (3) regularizing informal meetings of senior officials, most likely in proximity to international

meetings, and (4) creation of multi-donor sponsored training and conferences. These constitute four specific steps possible within the existing institutional authority of food aid agencies. Some specific details and alternative procedures entailed in undertaking these steps have been assessed. More specific ideas are outlined in the appendices. Some suggestions require virtually no additional time of staff or financial resources. In other instances, for example the development of software capability for improved food aid data reporting and management information, substantial additional time will be needed for the development and testing of the software. Some suggestions require simply an extension of procedures already developed in one location to new arenas, such as the instituting of the multi-donor working groups and country report model in countries in Africa. Other procedural undertakings may require development of relatively new procedures such as an annual senior officials "summit" or development of multi-donor training activities. The range of procedures suggested as options for enhancing information sharing among donors has been limited to those which seem practical given the resources of the food aid units of the respective donor countries.

A number of international institutions were reviewed regarding their ability to serve information sharing functions. Clearly donor information sharing and even policy coordination already takes place. Thus new steps would not take place in a vacuum. Indeed, there are international institutions with staff, budget and at least modest aspirations for growth ready to facilitate greater donor information sharing. All of the international bodies have some liabilities, however. The question of how best to utilize the existing institutional framework has been addressed. We explicitly assume that no completely new, formal institutions are necessary.

Finally, the report recalls that experience in information sharing has consistently testified to its importance and practicality. Western states studied over a range of economic issues. Uncoordinated actions can leave everyone worse

off. This rationale has sustained economic summit meetings of Western powers. (17) Likewise, experience from working level issue area exchanges is also almost unqualifiedly supportive. It shows that the secretariats of international organizations do not dominate the formation or the work of donors seeking more concerted actions. (18) The establishment of networks across borders has in fact enhanced the coherence of policy within states and has given additional capacity in policy formation to those officials closest to the problems being addressed. These findings suggest that greater information sharing and concerted efforts by the food aid bureaus of donor countries offers advantages to the food aid system generally promising positive results for both donors and recipients.

## 5. APPENDICES

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- A. Organizational and Budget Features of Food Aid Donors
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- D. Needs Assessment Design
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- F. Proposal for Joint Training
- G. Bibliography

## APPENDIX A

SELECTED FEATURES OF FOOD AID ADMINISTRATION IN  
THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, THE UNITED STATES, AND CANADAThe European Community

The European Community's food aid is authorized by two community institutions, the Council of Ministers and the Parliament of Europe. It is administered by the European Commission. The Council of Ministers approves the budgets and allocations proposed by the Commission and its Development Directorate (DG-VIII). The Parliament of Europe has discretionary power over the budget. Since the largest share of the Community budget is "non-obligatory," the Parliament gives extra attention to budgetary lines such as food aid over which it has more influence. Parliament is also able to shape food aid indirectly through legislative activity such as hearings and resolutions.

In 1982, the Council of Ministers gave the Commission greater latitude on food aid issues, especially in its emergency programming. The Commission can now act without first obtaining Council approval in emergency situations. The Commission has 20 General Directorates, but only two are directly involved in food aid activity: Development (DG-VIII) and Agriculture (DG-VI). Also DG-I, External Relations, is consulted in allocation decisions and in overseas delegation. Both agriculture and development issues are involved in food aid allocations. One section in DG-VI represents the Community's agricultural interests in food aid decision-making, and is primarily responsible for aspects of procurement and for shaping food aid uses to conform to the needs of the community's agricultural policy.

DG-VIII, the Directorate of Development, however, is centrally involved in food

aid decisions and increasingly has pursued development aims. The decisions made by DG-VIII require action by regional and country desk officers and the food aid specialists. There are not, however, as in the US regional officers within the food aid office itself. Thus desk officers and food aid analysts work more directly with each other across divisions in DG-VIII.

Budgeting food aid is greatly affected by the FAC commitment and by the Community's dairy product situation. Fifty-six percent of the EEC's FAC pledge is managed by DG-VIII normally; the remaining 44 percent is left for "national" (bi-lateral) actions by member states. In 1983 and 1984 the Community exceeded its minimum tonnage commitment in grains. Most all dairy products are handled by the Commission.

The Council of Ministries decides on the framework for allocations, and the Parliament of Europe has the power to approve the proposed budget. The DG-VIII's food aid budget, approved by the European Parliament, is used to pay world prices for the food it provides. DG-VI, the Agricultural Directorate, pays any difference between this and Community prices, since these are higher on average than world prices. Therefore, the DG-VI budget, which is set by the Council of Ministers, offsets the higher internal cost of providing food aid from Europe.

In 1983, the DG-VIII food aid division was split into two major sections: Programation which determines country allocations; and Mobilization which is responsible for getting the aid to its intended destination.

Programation coordinates requests from recipient countries and reconciles them with the total volume available. The Mobilization section is involved in many technical negotiations such as specifying the quality of commodities in the transaction; shipping the commodities; and confirming the receipt of the aid in the recipient country. The mobilization section must coordinate its activity with the Agricultural Directorate.

In a normal cycle, programation staff prepare provisional allocations for the

coming calendar year. This occurs in the December to January period. Recommended allocations among recipients are reviewed early in the fiscal year (fiscal and calendar years are the same). Once the Commission through a food aid committee on which 10 member states are represented approves or agrees to allocations, the Commission can take final action on the food aid. The Committee receives budget and allocation recommendations three or four times during a year. Emergency action can be taken by the Commission without reference to member states and as deemed necessary.

A special element in the food aid process of the European Community is its lack of rigid budget structure. What is budgeted one year may not be shipped for a subsequent year and may be reallocated so that it ends up in a country for which it was not originally budgeted. This allows Community officials to ship food from a previous year's budget at the same time it is planning next year's food aid levels.

### The United States

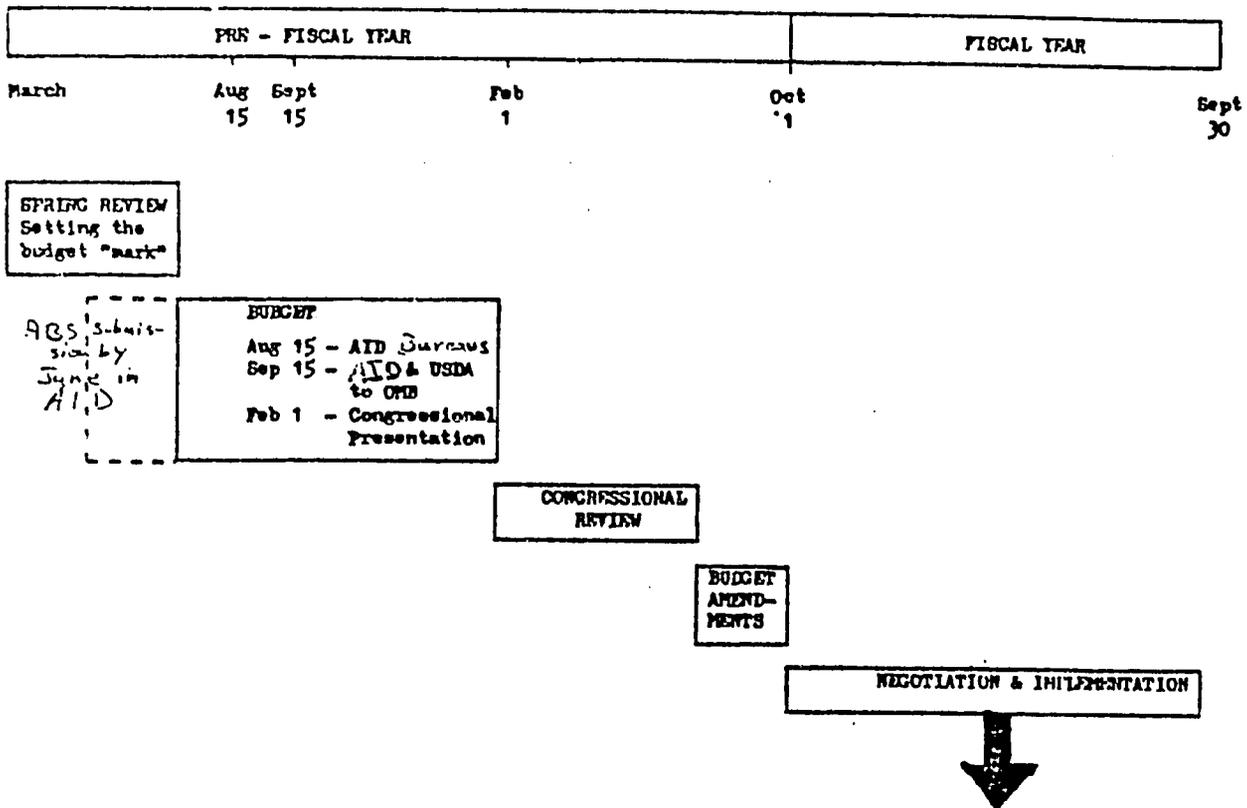
Four agencies are involved in the budgetary and allocation decisions of the food aid program in the United States: the Department of Agriculture (USDA); the Department of State (DOS); the Agency for International Development (AID); and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The Treasury Department and the National Security Council participate less regularly but are members of the Food Aid interagency subcommittee of the Development Coordinating Committee (DCC). The DCC is a formal arm of the moribund International Development Cooperation Agency. The working group of the DCC's Food Aid Committee must give approval at certain stages in the allocation process, especially for Title I programs. At times up to 16 offices of the 7 agencies provide some kind of input during the budget process of PL 480. The major agencies/offices in the allocation process are AID's Bureau of Food For Peace and Voluntary Assistance (FVA); the regional bureaus of AID and State; the State Department's Office of Food Policy (OFP); USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service's Export Sales, and the OMB international affairs division.

Due to the large number of agencies involved in the program's allocations, numerous consultations are necessary to get an allocation approved.

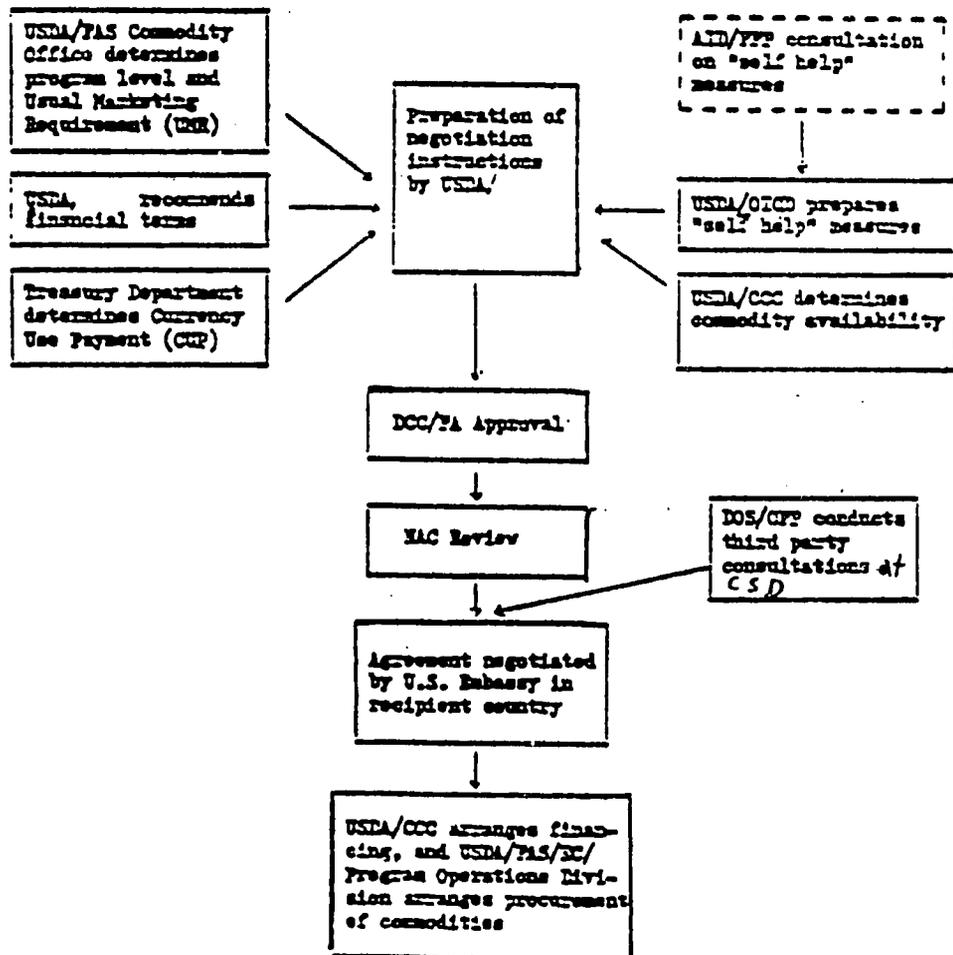
Since 1976 the budgetary levels have been fairly stable at approximately 1.5 billion dollars. The U.S. program emphasizes monetary rather than tonnage commitments. Allocation decisions that change country levels are usually due to changes in the priorities of the United States or changes in a recipient country's food needs. The United States begins planning allocations about 18 months prior to the start of the fiscal year in which the aid is to be provided. Negotiations to formalize aid to a country for one year occur at the same time that reviews and budgetary planning is underway for one or two future years. Figure 1 details the steps involved.

Figure A.1

STAGES OF THE P.L. 480 BUDGET PROCESS



FORMULATION AND NEGOTIATION OF TYPE I/II FOOD AID AGREEMENTS



Most allocation decisions occur in the budgetary process rather than during the year that commitments and shipments occur. There are five stages to this process, as figure 1 points out. The first stage is a spring review. OMB asks the President to approve an overall budget "mark" within which PL 480 must fall. Overseas missions of AID are asked to prepare Annual Budget Submissions (ABS). The total budget figure grows or shrinks as a component in the federal budget reflecting Presidential priorities, pressure from deficits, and trade-offs between PL480 spending and domestic agricultural support programs.

The second stage is the budget submissions which involve the USDA, AID, and State, all preparing allocation recommendations. Overseas AID missions recommend allocations in the ABS (which usually reflect earlier guidance from Washington). Intra-agency reviews of these requests occur within AID and State Bureaus and at USDA. USDA prepares budget allocations separately, paying attention to the amount of commodities to be transferred as well as the specific country requests. At this stage comprehensive information on comparative food needs and economic policies of different countries is relevant but often given quite uneven attention. The Department of State does not have a formal intra-agency review but they do make recommendations usually to defend special political interests. After the intra-agency reviews there are several inter-agency reviews by the food aid working group. After these reviews budgets are submitted to the Office of Management and Budget in September, one year prior to the period being budgeted.

OMB conducts a "Presidential review" in October and November comparing agency recommendations and their adherence to guidelines established at the spring review. After any further revisions, the budget is sent for another inter-agency review before it becomes part of the total budget submission to Congress in January.

After this the proposed allocations are in a third phase, congressional review. Here totals and regional levels are the major focus. The PL 480 budget is reviewed by six sub-committees, including Senate and House Agricultural sub-committees (these

consider the types of and levels of commodities for the aid) and the Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations committees which attend to the international development issues specific to food aid. Even after a budget is passed, if the the original allocations are not sufficient, budget amendments to meet emergencies may be submitted. The executive branch may also draw from uncommitted reserves to meet unexpected new requests.

The final phase of the allocation process involves negotiations and implementations of the sales agreements. This involves a government-to-government contract for Title I/III and PVO agreements or government-to-government for Title II. These specify levels and types of commodities, and the terms of the transfer. The Export Credit Office of the USDA has primary responsibility for the negotiating instructions. Of course State and AID play a major role in establishing terms. For Titles I and II, the terms specify the period of and interest rate for repayment. The USDA also tends to set commodity levels and types for Title I/III food aid while AID does this for Title II. The Treasury Department advises on the size of the currency use payment which is paid to the US embassy in the recipient country. Finally self-help measures, Title III conditions and other end use specifications with the recipient country are drawn up by AID based on its development mandate. These are pieced together in the inter-agency framework.

Negotiating instructions must then be approved by the working group and sent to the US embassy in the recipient country which is responsible for the negotiations.

### Canada

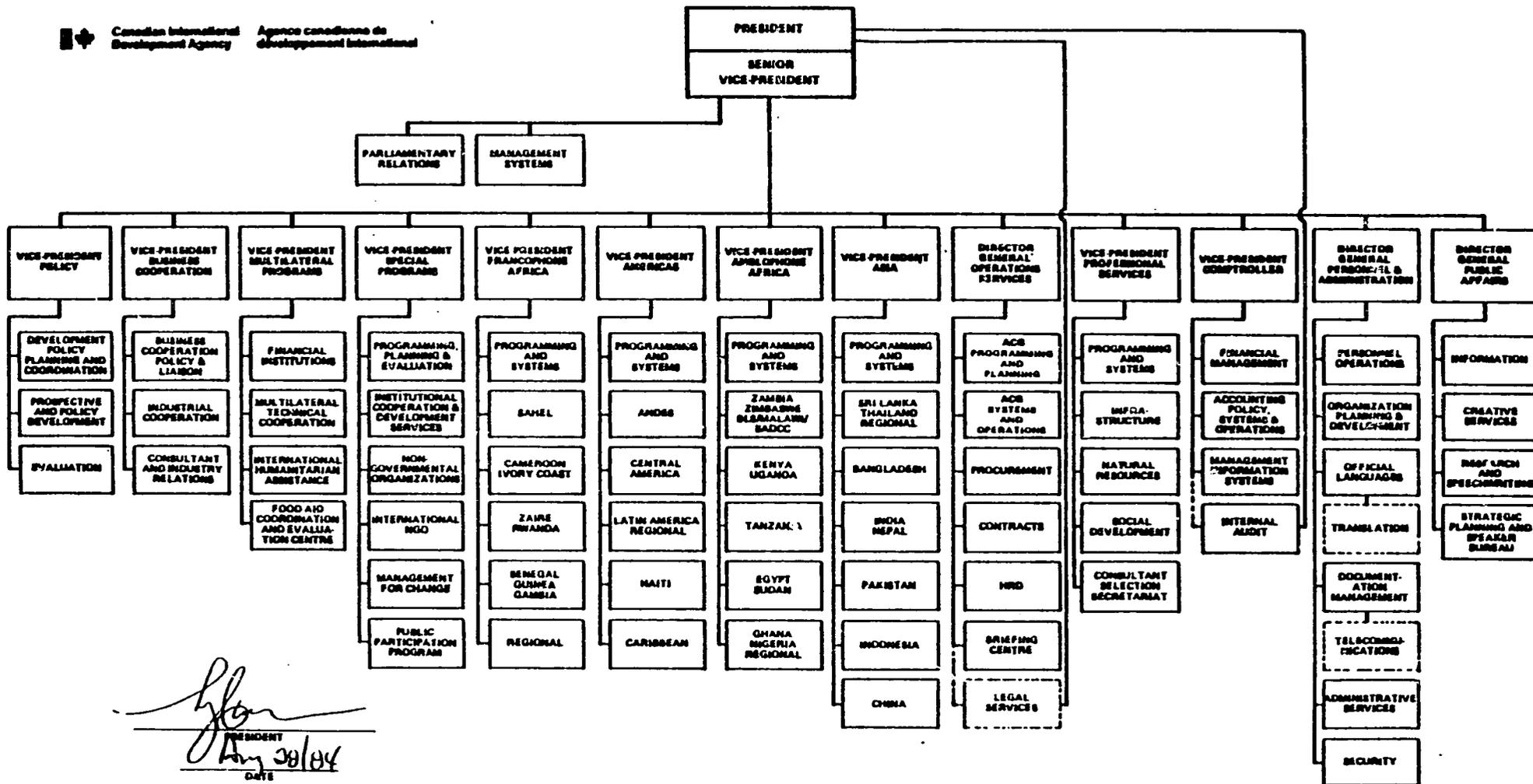
In Canada, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has responsibility for the food aid programme. Various other departments and agencies are involved in the policy development process, particularly Agriculture Canada and External Affairs. These and other departments are consulted in the formulation of strategic food aid policies such as future food aid budget levels, objectives of the programme, the commodity basket, and delivery channels. An Interdepartmental Committee for World Food Program, which is chaired by the Department of Agriculture, formulates the Canadian position on matters relating to the WFP although CIDA has increasingly taken a lead in WFP issues. Major international obligations such as FAC commitments and WFP and IEFER pledges require Cabinet or Treasury Board approval.

Within CIDA, various branches are responsible for particular parts of the aid programme. There is FACE, the Food Aid Coordination and Evaluation Centre, which was established in 1978 within the Multilateral Programmes Branch. It is charged with policy formulation related to food aid, programme coordination, management of the food aid budget, and advice to operating branches on issues related to food aid. FACE also has specific program responsibility for the WFP and the IEFER, though lead responsibility for Canada's participation in the WFP and the IEFER still rests formally with Agriculture Canada because of the traditional ties between it and the FAO. The position of FACE within CIDA is shown in Figure A.2. The second important group of actors within CIDA are the four geographic area branches (Asia; Anglophone Africa; Francophone Africa; and the Americas) which are responsible for planning and implementation of food aid provided to recipient countries. And finally in Canada there is an NGO Division of the Special Programs Branch which manages the NGO Skim Milk Powder Program and contributions to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

The Food Aid Programme is approved and administered on an annual fiscal year

(April-March) basis. What is budgeted for one year must be spent that year or it will lapse. The Main Estimates allocate overall amounts of food aid to multilateral and country-to-country programs. Specific allocations within these levels are then approved by the Treasury Board, the Minister or the President and Vice-Presidents of CIDA according to their respective approval authorities.

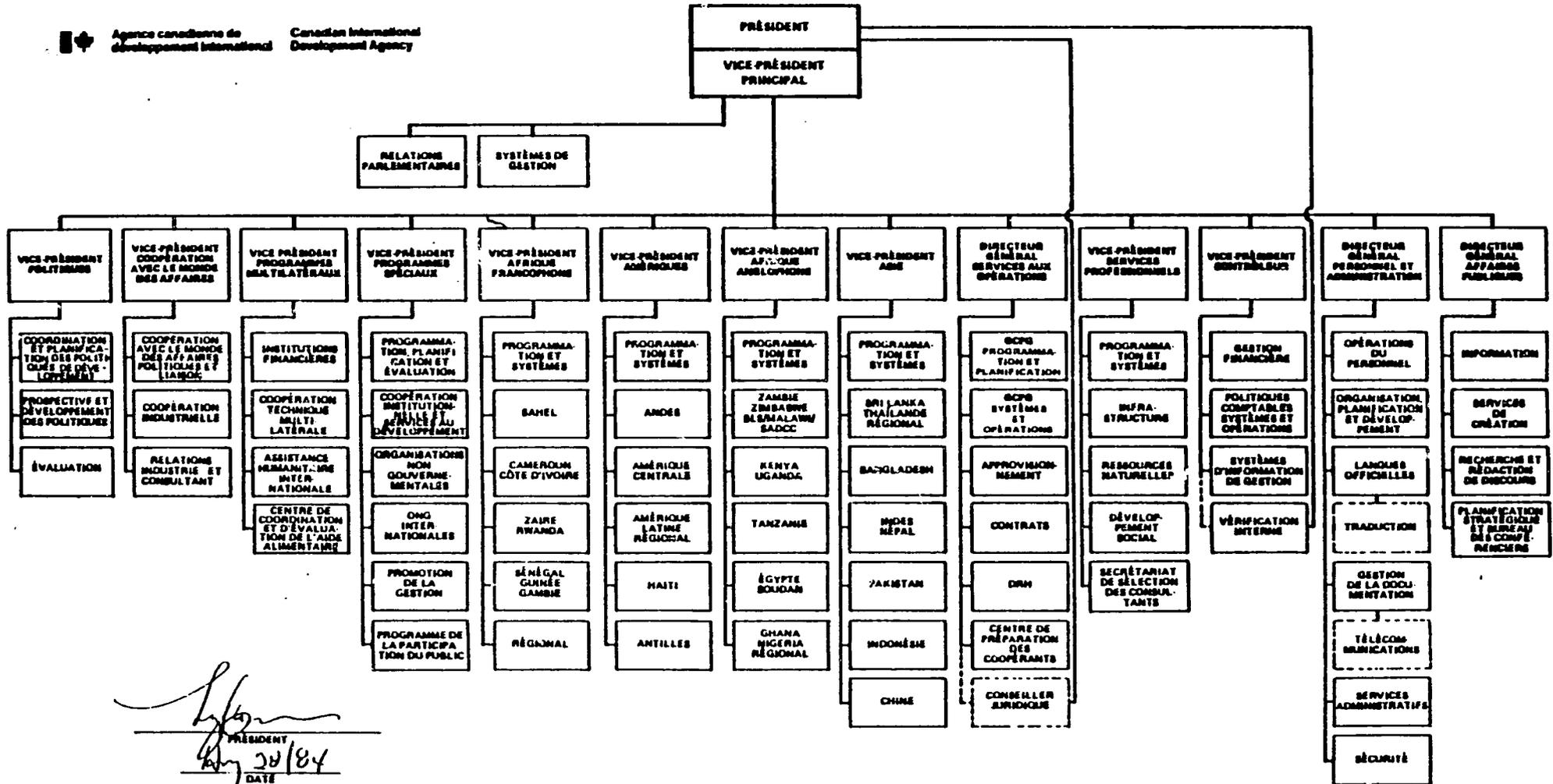
The Interdepartmental Committee for the World Food Program determines commodity composition and procurement of commodities for multilateral aid. In the case of bilateral food aid, the responsible area branch negotiates the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which is signed by Canada and the recipient country, and specifies the implementation framework for each country allocation. CIDA also enters into agreements with Canadian Non-government Organizations (NGO). The Procurement Division of CIDA is responsible for procurement of commodities and, in the case of most bilateral food aid, of transportation and superintendence services as well. The food is purchased through the Department of Supply and Services or directly from federal marketing boards. The Department of External Affairs notifies the Consultative Committee on Surplus Disposal of proposed Canadian food aid transactions and either determines the Usual Marketing Requirement (UMR) or accepts one set by another donor.



  
 PRESIDENT  
 May 28/84  
 DATE



Agence canadienne de développement international Canadian International Development Agency



*[Signature]*  
 PRÉSIDENT  
 20/84  
 DATE

## APPENDIX B — PHONE BOOK

## I. Administrators of Aid Agency in US, EC and Canada

United States Agency for International Development  
 Bureau for Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance  
 Area code 202

Assistant Administrator Julia Chang Bloch.....235-1800  
 .....632-0108  
 Deputy Assistant Administrator Walter Bollinger.....235-9418

OFFICE OF PROGRAM, POLICY AND EVALUATION (FVA/PPE)

Director J.L. Manzano.....235-9161  
 Deputy Director Louis Stamberg .....235-1940  
 Policy Analysis Division (FVA/PPE/PAD)  
 Chief Steve French.....235-1231  
 Evaluation Judy Gilmore.....235-1291

OFFICE FOR FOOD FOR PEACE (FVA/FFP)

Coordinator Thomas Reese.....235-9210  
 Deputy Coordinator Steven Singer.....235-9210  
 Title I Division (FVA/FFP/I)  
 Chief William Rhoads.....235-9238  
 Title II Division (FVA/FFP/II)  
 Chief William Pearsor.....235-9173  
 Program Operations Division (FVA/FFP/PO)  
 Chief Jeanne Markuris.....235-9213

European Community Development Group VIII  
Agriculture, Food, Environment, and Food Aid  
Area code 32-2-23

Chief of Division Gunter Gruner.....51372/50010  
Coordinator Administrator Maria-Therese Baes.....53410

RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD POLICY

Food Security Strategies Walter Kennes.....53026  
Rural Environmental Development Robert Gregoire.....53920  
Agricultural Research (C.T.A.) Jean-Louis Chiltz.....54934  
Economic Anyalsis and Evaluations of Projects and Operations  
Marc Franco.....51430

FOOD AID

I. Programmation

Louis Huby.....54991  
Bilateral Programs Clodagh O'Brien.....55554  
Emergency Aid Francesca Mosca.....54993  
Committee on Food Aid Maria-Therese Baes.....53410  
NGO's Hugh Maclean.....54991

II. Mobilization

Jose Chollet.....54260  
Country Aid Gudrun Daschke.....51470  
International Organizational Aid  
Bruno Koegelsberger.....57429  
Triangular Operations Elisabeth Pardon.....54386  
Financial and Credit Aspects Derek Quinlin.....56821

Canadian Agency for International Development  
Area code 819

Food Aid Coordination and Evaluation (FACE)

Director David Hutton.....	997-9492
Policy Development Dianne Spearman.....	994-3959
Program Development and Evaluation Jerry Kramer.....	994-3958
Institutional Development Hans Hermens.....	994-0935
Program Manager Victor Jarjour.....	994-3964

International Food Aid Organizations

Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations

Via delle Terme di Caracalla

00100 Rome Italia

Food Security and Food Policies Group

Barbara Huddleston, Chief.....5797-3052

International Wheat Council (IWC)

28, Haymarket

London, SW1Y 4SS

Jean-Henri Parotte, Executive Secretary.....01-930-4128

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

2, rue Andre-Pascal

75775 Paris FRANCE

Development Assistance Committee

Rutherford M. Poats, Chairman.....524-8980

World Food Council (WFC)

Via dei Casale delle Cornachhoiole

00178 Rome, Italia

Policy Coordination and External Relations

Maurice Williams, Executive Director.....5797-4829

Brian W. Ross.....5797-3882

World Food Program (WFP)

Via delle Terme di Caracalla

00100 Rome Italia

James C. Ingram, Executive Director.....5797-3030

Senior Policy Advisor in the Office of the Executive Director

Charles Paolillo.....5797-6301

## APPENDIX C—MONTHLY COUNTRY REPORTS

To achieve a system of country level food aid working groups, several steps are recommended. These are aimed at producing institutionalized donor coordination and the generation of fairly complete monthly reports. The steps prescribed are practical undertakings, some perhaps obvious. They strive to be cost effective suggestions as to how donors might proceed to implement the recommendations for enhanced field level reporting.

Forming a Working Group. Every significant donor should be invited to nominate a representative to a working group on food aid. Invitations should be sent by one of the major donors on behalf of the three. In many cases where emergency or other conditions have created ad hoc working groups, the major task would be to transform these into more established bodies and cultivate report preparation activities. Officials with the skills to lead such a group and to develop a field report are a scarce resource. In each country perhaps only one or two people would be really good at this task. No procrustean formula, including rotating chairmanships, is recommended, therefore. Rather the delegates, mission directors, or senior official of the development bureau should seek the best person(s), based on ability and interest, to chair the group. Flexibility would be the key. Nevertheless, normally an official from one of the major donors or the WFP resident representative should be chosen. As a technical body, the food aid working group should meet independently of other donor groups. Its major tasks would be to track the food situation, collect or, if necessary, generate information, and regularly prepare a report.

Once formed, each country group should decide, within limits, a division of tasks and format for operation, but the Bangladesh system, in which the US and WFP work with the government and other donors, serves as a useful general model. Another instance is Tanzania, where a nascent working group was formed in 1982-83

under the leadership of the EEC delegation. All the information recommended for the report might not always be easy for the working group to obtain but it should remain a goal. An important element in reports will be prices, not only official prices but also the informal and effective prices faced by consumers. Drafts of regular reports should be circulated for review by the working group on a monthly basis. In emergencies even more frequent reviews would be possible, while in other instances a bi-monthly report would be perfectly serviceable.

Gathering Information. Reliable information in many countries, especially in Africa, is hard to acquire. Some information such as records of parastatals may not be made public. Other information, such as unofficial prices, may not be easily available. Still further information, such as production and consumption figures, may be only crude estimates. Nevertheless, in most countries five year records for the major data, though possibly not prices, can be pulled together. Indeed, support for such statistical record keeping often is already part of some technical assistance projects in various countries.

Three avenues are open for gathering information. First, several government ministries and bodies produce data. Liaisons with key officials in these organs and their participation in the working group should be sought. Notably this would include ministries of agriculture, finance, the census bureau, and the grain parastatal. Second, academic and research groups should be tapped. FAO early warning teams, where they exist, and university institutes should be prime candidates for material. Assembling such material regularly will require developing and maintaining trustful, cooperative relationships. Sharing the report produced each month would be a major way to reciprocate for cooperation. Third, direct collection of data in some cases will be appropriate.

Often relevant information already exists but is found in different locations and ministries and is not systematically brought together because each government body has no need for the complete set. In Kenya, for example, price data is

available from the CBS and not the Ministry of Agriculture. NCPB data is available from the marketing division of Agriculture. Anticipated imports would have to be assembled directly. Cooperation of governments would be greatest if there were strong reasons to expect that food aid would be available in a more responsive fashion as a result. In Kenya, an informal inquiry to Simor Nyachae (cabinet secretary and chair of the Food Committee of the Government) indicated a willingness to participate in a working group.

In addition to government data, research by international organizations, local institutes and independent academics could be solicited. This would require developing ongoing ties to such groups. Often one or more donors support research efforts that yield pertinent data. Officials and delegates often discuss broad issues with independent researchers. With a modest amount of coordination the results of such work could be screened by those chairing the working group for relevant information. Finally, the working group could establish some direct data collection activities. A survey of prices for key staples in selected markets could be undertaken with the help of volunteers sending in monthly findings. Visits by working group members to selected areas of the country or travel by other officials, even overseas volunteers, would be occasions for gathering data. This seemingly opportunistic approach is similar to some techniques already used, at least in Africa. For example, some early warning efforts have used reports from volunteer observers for location-specific rainfall measurements and other reports to assess the prospects of impending production.

One or more donors should be prepared to budget for a short-term staff person to set up such additional data acquisition efforts. A master's level training and/or some experience in crop and market behavior would be the qualifications appropriate for such a task. Such a person, or an official on the working group, should work closely with the forecast estimators in the government and, where applicable, the FAO early warning team. The result would be that donor capitals

would have information on expected crop shortfalls that was fairly complete, had been reviewed in the field and arrived earlier than at present, especially earlier than the current FAO system which collates, reviews and analyzes data in Rome before circulating it. The information system for the working group as described here would be the responsibility of a few people, but would be strengthened in its reliability by the oversight provided through the multidonor and recipient government participation.

Report Preparation. Routinization of report preparation could be facilitated by having a regular schedule for the research staff person to update data from government agencies and from research projects. In many poor, smaller states, this task would be an unfair burden on recipient government officials. Directly acquired data would also be best scheduled for monthly reporting. Micro computers, which are available in most donors' overseas missions or delegation offices would permit the basic word processing and spread sheet programs to be used to facilitate monthly report updating with minimal clerical work. The chair of the working group would normally prepare the report, checking numbers with others.

Policy Framework Information. A section of the monthly report should go beyond the five year tracking of the food system. Variables useful for needs estimates should be supplemented with a section describing current policies, their implementation and the policy options under discussion. Such information would be useful for a policy dialogue and for policy-based lending. Exchange rate information, an estimate of foreign reserves, and an estimate of trends in urban-rural terms of trade would be among factors germane to the policy framework. Here donor officials can put together a fairly good picture through sharing information each develops in the course of its work and negotiations with the recipient country.

Report Format. The basic information and means to acquire it have been discussed. A sample of the Bangladesh report could be recommended to the working

group in each country as a basic model. Its layout would be amended to suit local conditions and to add the policy framework section. The recent FAO/WFP reports on the African emergency also provide serviceable partial models, offering a mixture of commentary on current conditions with basic empirical estimates of food system performances. If requested, a separate checklist of questions to be addressed and of data to be provided could be prepared in the form of a short memo donors could use in the field. This would formalize the discussion in the body of this report and this appendix. However, such an exercise might be perceived as pedantic rather than creative by bright and energetic field staff.

## APPENDIX D — DESIGNING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

To be useful, food aid needs assessments of the "need" for food aid must relate to allocation decisions. Otherwise they are merely sterile exercises. Allocation decisions necessarily follow bureaucratic rules and practices—even for emergencies. To improve needs assessments' utility it is suggested that a working group meeting of donor and international officials agree on a common framework for needs assessments. This appendix discusses some key issues that need to be resolved, and offers proposals for making needs assessments that would, it is believed, improve their value. The procedures discussed here could be a subject for a working party review.

Issues. Stipulating the amount of food aid a country "needs" is an exercise fraught with arbitrary decisions. What goal should be sought in satisfying need: a minimum nutrition standard, or perhaps merely stability of food availability or possibly some other "objective" function? Should stocks in a country be a factor? Should a country's foreign exchange position be considered? Should the physical capacity to import by regular means be a constraint? Are intra country (subnational) food needs relevant; should, for example, shortfalls in one part of a national food system, say in urban rural areas or infertile regions, whether caused by transportation or government legal barriers, be taken into account? Undertakings to estimate needs must make some assumptions in response to these issues.

Several needs estimates are prepared to guide food aid policy making. Most well-known is the ongoing assessment by the FAO used in their report on Cereal Import Requirements. Donors also have worked up their own assessments, often less systematically. The United States prepares a Food Aid Needs and Availabilities report, but it has not forecast current needs based on production results. From its inception through 1984, it estimated needs based on projections and did not include immediate production and stock circumstances. It is expected to be amended to use

more timely information that would make it more useful to allocation decisions. In estimating the needs of African states in the 1983-85 period, FAO estimates of need have not always corresponded to estimates of donors. In part this has been a result of applying different tests to estimate the gap to be met.

It is perhaps not possible and probably not desirable to have one formula by which all donors and international bodies estimate the need for food aid of a potential recipient. Elsewhere it has been suggested that having agreement or "facts" was desirable, or at least a clear understanding if facts were in dispute as to what the reasons for this might be. Needs are, however, interpretations of "facts." Therefore several estimates are called for in response to different assumptions. Basically different assumptions turn on two questions: (1) What conditions should be the basis for establishing need; (2) What burden should a needy country bear in meeting its own needs. Different answers to these questions can lead to quite different needs assessments.

Basis of Need. There are two bases for food aid. First, there is a structural one. In this case, whenever a country has both a portion of its population undernourished and welcomes interventions from outside to provide food to such people it is eligible for food aid. In this category poorer countries which have food-for-work, MCH school feeding and other targeted food subsidy programs, usually planned on a multi-year or ongoing basis, develop a predictable need for food aid. Structural need does not reflect the ongoing ability to use food aid. China and India, for example, receive aid for projects, but could use much more based on nutritional and poverty criteria. Rather, this is an initial step in setting the basis for structural food aid, namely chronic undernutrition which the international community seeks to reduce. The second step for food aid based on structural need is for a contract to be made. Then the need becomes contextually determined by programs and projects that have evolved into institutionalized arrangements.

There is thus no perfect correlation between need, as defined above, and

absolute nutritional levels or production variability in the country. Rather the need is based on negotiated arrangements that establish strong expectations between governments, private organizations and recipient groups. Such a need is regularly estimated in forward budgeting of food aid in support of existing and projected commitments and absorptive capacity of projects and programs. Budget based projections of need are inevitably constrained by supply constraints. The need projected against such constraints arises from the texus of existing food aid uses with their implied commitments and sunk costs in delivery organizations. Even coverage for "normal" emergencies, not predictable by specific countries in advance, can be fit into the structural approach. The unallocated reserves of donors and the emergency budget of the WFP/FAO are geared to an estimated level of special emergency needs to be met through quick action. The assumption here is that special needs, above specific institutionalized commitments, will be aggregatively fairly stable. Nevertheless, for allocation to specific countries, the second basis for needs assessment --variability-- must be employed.

The second basis for need arises from food shortages. When the normal domestic availability of food declines, some portion of the shortfall is normally offset by imports. A variable food aid need arises when countries are too poor to afford imports and have little or no domestic adjustment capability. The size of the variable need, i.e., the need related to a particular year or period in which domestic availability falls below expected availability depends on several factors. First, how should the gap between actual and expected supplies be measured: on the difference between the trend in per capita availability of past years and actual supply, or between the average availability and supplies. Second, should some of this decline or "gap" be made up by other than food aid steps, and, if so, how much and by what. Other steps include commercial imports, reduced diets, and redistribution from non-human to human uses, e.g., less for livestock, seed or waste. The FAO Requirements estimate uses a projection of cereals imports needed to

maintain the trend in availability, and determines food aid "needs" as the residual after expected commercial imports. FANA tries to assess a burden for state adjustment through commercial imports using levels of foreign exchange reserves. Other models have tried to estimate commercial food imports as a function of export earnings.

In general the principle has been followed that the poorer the country the greater the adjustment to be borne by food aid. The problem is, however, that there is considerable room for different estimates of need even if this principle is accepted. If it is assumed that a country should draw down its stocks first, or reduce the average dietary intake substantially, or purchase commercially some fraction of its "need" before it is eligible for food aid, then the shortfall will be very hard on a recipient. Variable food aid as insurance or a countercyclical stabilizing force will be aimed at reducing catastrophes primarily and the amount of food aid needed would be much less. Still, if such variable aid were reserved for the most dire cases, its use would follow more the guidelines emphasized by Scandinavian countries for food aid.

Finally, a dilemma arises in variable need regarding the mix of donor and recipient responsibility. Should donors provide as much regardless of how much of the burden of adjustment a recipient bears? Should policy reform in recipients be tied to the amount provided? Should delivery in emergencies be politically neutral -- that is, should and can donors target food aid to a need within a country or must need be only a national attribute and the distribution of the food aid the responsibility of the recipient? Recipients who choose to do more themselves by way of adjustment to reduce the effects of shortages on their populations in some sense both need less and deserve more. In designing a need assessment, this dilemma deserves to be addressed.

Recommended Approaches. As a basis for working out "needs" estimates, the following are recommended. First, three different time frames should be used for

needs: (1) The current year, i.e., what "needs" to arrive in the next three to nine months; (2) the planning period, i.e., what need is projected for the following two years; and (3) longer-terms food aid needs, i.e., five, ten and fifteen year future projections. Second, different factors and different weights should be used in reaching estimates in these different periods. In the estimates of immediate need, efforts to reach minimal national nutritional levels, as used in the current longer term FAO and FANA projections, would not be used. Increased demand based on economic growth would also be really important only in the longer range forecasts. In the shortest term need estimate, a fairly precise standard for a country's burden to use stocks and import commercially could be used. In longer term estimates less precise estimates of capacity to import commercially would be appropriate and stocks might not be a relevant factor.

In the "current" needs estimates the information on production results and stocks should be measured against the average per capita availability of recent years (not the trend) and food aid need derived as a share of the gap. The share assigned to food aid should be a function of the burden that a country ought to assume. This is the key issue. It deserves considerable attention and perhaps could even be left to be explicitly negotiated on a country-by-country basis, thereby recognizing the non-technical element of this sometimes disguised assumption. What this means is that each potential recipient country might have a "burden" factor assigned to it based on negotiations, perhaps under the aegis of the WFP or FAO. Need estimates for intermediate and long-term periods would be less able to estimate the variable need of individual countries, but could have an appropriate estimate of the total variable need--i.e., the emergency and unplanned program aid to meet supply shortfalls, especially as a range rather than point estimate.

A country's "need" for the current period would be based on the sum of structural and variable need estimates. In a favorable production year, a question

arises over a "negative" gap. Should the variable need be zero or should a country be expected to allocate some of its above average supply to structural food aid uses in its country? If it did so would donors give it money instead, as the EEC can do in modest amounts, or perhaps future food aid drawing rights or cancellation of previous food aid debts from earlier Title I aid? The variable need should be estimated at zero in years of good crops for a recipient unless donors are prepared to offer substitute resources in exchange for a recipient country's providing the food itself for its own structural needs. When per capita food availability continues to rise in a country, of course, structural need would gradually be reduced as donors responded to the improved situation by lowering their support for various projects and subsidy programs.

Studies of forecasting suggest a sharp decline in accuracy after five years and practically no accuracy after fifteen years. The longer-term five to fifteen-year forecasts, therefore, as done by the FAO and IFPRI, should be regularly reworked, but will serve principally as a justification for planning incremental expansions or contractions of the food aid system as a whole. They would have little role in the allocation of near term budget processes.

## APPENDIX E — COMMON SPECIFICATION OF DATA

A common accounting system for food aid transactions should be negotiated by a select group of officials. This task is quite a possible assignment for those responsible for maintaining accounts in major donors. It poses no threats to the autonomy of donors or recipients. It would require no major changes in decision practices or the formats of reports. It would increase the comparability of data and its ease of use.

Steps to Achieve Agreement. A meeting of one or two appropriate officials of the three major donors plus the World Food Program should be the first step. Their mandate would be to agree on standardized monthly accounting categories. The agreed format would establish the expected entries in each country's accounts. Agreement would not be difficult if the decision to achieve a common data format were made at a broad political level first. There is little vested interest in any particular format as long as it is compatible with other required reporting formats.

Software for food aid accounts could then be written, perhaps even by a single firm. General software could have appropriate modifications for individual users. The working level officials who manage the food aid accounts would prepare the terms of reference. These would specify tasks for a contracted vendor or for internal staff, whichever was writing the software.

Common Format. A form specifying basic data for common accounting is shown on the next page. It glosses over certain distinctions and budgeting complexities. Its main purpose is to establish simple and common records of (1) real net transfers, (2) the time when effective decisions were made and (3) when benefits became available

**Table E.1 Sample Form**  
**Proposed Standardized Monthly Accounting Reports**

Country	Commodity	Provisional Allocations				Allocation Agreements				Allocations Received					Terms	
		Date	Quantity (MT)	In donor Currency	Value US\$	Date	Quantity (MT)	In donor Currency	Value US\$	Date Shipped	Date Received	Port	Quantity (MT)	In donor Currency		Value * US\$

\*Shipping costs included

Table E.2 Examples  
Proposed Standardized Monthly Accounting Reports

Country	Commodity	Provisional Allocations				Allocation Agreements				Allocations Received					Terms	
		Date	Quantity (MT)	In donor Currency	Value US\$ million	Date	Quantity (MT)	In donor Currency	Value US\$	Date Shipped	Date Received	Port	Quantity (MT)	In donor Currency		Value * US\$
ZAMBIA	MAIZE	1/1/83	20,000	1.86	1.86	1/1/83	20,000		1.86	15.4.83	21.5.83	Durban Lusaka	18,796	2.81		Title I; 40 year no cup, 2% & no pr: for 10 yrs -- Balan in 30 yrs. @ 3%
TANZANIA	WHEAT	1/1/83	15,000	3.0	3.0											
	RICE					1/6/83	6,000	3.0	3.0	15.7.83	10.9.83	DSM	5,718	4.1		Title II; C.I.F.. DSM

\*Shipping costs  
included, if paid

from these transfers. These are the most salient aspects of behavior worth recording.

The monthly accounting report proposed would look like a time line from the point a donor publically indicates its intention to the final transfer of title from a shipper to the designated authority in the recipient country. This approach enables the data to be easily transferred to graphic displays. It also allows analysts to track shifts in the commodity composition or costs of a transaction. With the accounts established, world food aid balance sheet that is roughly identical for all donors and recipients would easily be generated for any given year. This could be accomplished by summarizing all transactions in particular columns, say those for allocations received that fell within certain dates, say a particular calendar year. In general, for historical record keeping the calendar year has distinct advantages over fiscal or marketing year divisions. Nevertheless, some analysts might prefer to use a marketing year grouping of aid to relate it better to production data. This could easily be done as well. A key issue to be resolved is valuation. The net worth to a recipient is considerably less for food aid sold concessionally, largely PL 480 Title I. The simplest procedure to address this point and other questions as to the value of particular quantities of food aid would be to standardize accounts at different points in the transaction according to different standards of valuation. The most common anomaly shared among donors is between F.O.B. and C.I.F. costs. In general, the value of food received should be shown as C.I.F. when donors pay this. The value of both grant and concessional sales could be recorded as F.O.B. under the allocation agreements. A third value estimating the total concessional worth of the "aid" could be recorded under the "terms" columns. In this respect each major transaction point in the accounts would register fairly accurately the value of the transaction as the opportunity cost to the units involved in the transaction. The illustrations in table E.2 are purely hypothetical U.S. transactions to indicate how the recommended form could work.

Definitional Issues. There are further issues involved in recording a transaction which could be addressed. One important definitional issue is whether to count as food aid that food which is paid for by donors outside the normal food aid budget. We now have cases where food is given on special conditions such as under the Commodity Import Program of the United States (conditions identical to most Title I aid) or other government's special loan programs, or where untied grants provided by governments are used to import food. To complicate the issue further, certain countries are given food aid under swapping or bartering arrangements (the Russians have done this occasionally). The issue is whether such transactions should be included as food aid, and if so, how. Furthermore, the EEC now has authority to substitute cash for food when food aid that is allocated is not needed. This too raises accounting anomalies. In general, donor aid used to import food should be called food aid. This will require some more careful tracking by donors.

Another issue is whether or not a particular transaction is ever to be considered food aid. For example in the Egyptian government PL 480 Title I food aid is classified as a commercial import since it comes on a loan basis and the presumption is that the loan will eventually be repaid even though its conditions are highly concessional. In contrast PL 480 Title II aid, along with aid from the European Community goes to the inter-committee on food aid which has its own warehouses and operating conditions in the Ministry of Supply and which is not recorded as a regular import in the Egyptian statistics. Recipients could be asked to develop a more common approach to their record keeping.

A third definitional issue arises over the point at which donor-recipient action constitutes "food aid." That is, should food aid be counted as aid at the point of commitment, which is usually the point at which donor countries indicate that a transaction has occurred, or should it be at the point of actual arrival in the recipient country, which is where the IWC and some other monitoring agencies

want to record the food aid. As implied earlier, the most meaningful point for recording food aid is the actual arrival in the recipient country. If this were formalized it might be more likely for some countries to use arrival dates for planning. This change would better synchronize donor planning with "need" realities in recipient countries. Budgetary considerations linked to fiscal year planning would continue to operate, but possibly with less dominance in policy calculations. Almost uniquely in the EEC it is possible to program aid authorized in the previous year. This is possible only for special exceptions in the US or Canada. With revised and more common accounting schemes it might be possible for the food aid bureaus in donor countries to expand their budgetary flexibility in a fashion analogous to that of the EEC.

The objective pursued in proposing a common format for record keeping is not only to reduce inconsistencies. It is also to facilitate the transmission of more complete and timely information. With a common format, reports can be sent to the FAO, IWC and OECD in such a way that each international organization can have the same data and can reformulate it as it deems best. Each donor could have information about other donors not built up from individual country reports as is now sometimes the case. The general result should be more uniform records among donors and international bodies.

## APPENDIX F — PROPOSAL FOR JOINT TRAINING

The major food aid donors should establish a training consortium under the auspices of an existing independent institution. IFPRI and Sussex, and perhaps ISNAR (at the Hague), are institutions with suitable experience in providing training and in the subject fields relevant for food aid officials. These and others should be considered for this undertaking. The proposed consortium would be housed as an administrative subunit of the institution chosen, and would be responsible for developing training courses. Each donor would contribute a membership fee to the consortium sufficient to meet the core expenses of planning and providing courses and training seminars. Each member donor would be invited to send selected staff to a two week session scheduled on an annual basis. If demand warranted this could be done every six months. Participants' travel and miscellaneous expenses would be the responsibility of the individual governments that nominated them. Slots in the training program would be allocated according to the annual membership contribution.

Subjects. Each participant would study two subjects during a session. Usually these would be chosen from three or four subjects offered. The general expectation is that the courses would be university level in calibre, but suitable for non-specialists and in-service training. Formal instruction would be a mixture of lectures, demonstrations and intensive seminar discussions. Participants would do some writing each day. Instructors would be experienced educators, supplemented, as appropriate, by specialists in particular topics. Course subjects would be worked out in consultation with donor members. Attractive topics for these include: (1) food policy, a general course built around the recent volume by Peter Timmer, et. al. supplemented with case studies; (2) policy based lending, a study of the conditions for successful policy dialogue and for developing proposals for the use of food aid in support of policy initiatives with special attention to the bureaucratic and administrative considerations and level of commitment necessary for

success; (3) agricultural development and food aid, a course that especially would review the links between food aid and domestic systems, e.g., disincentive issues, commodity grading and milling requirements, the economics of storage and transportation, fortification and nutrition issues, and consumer food subsidies; (4) emergencies and famines, a review of the causes and consequences of acute food shortages and the logistical, economic, social and political factors involved in designing effective intervention measures; and (5) microcomputers and food aid management, an applied exposure to the relevant software for quick analysis of food issues and basic record keeping.

Schedule. The two week session would include time for instruction, independent study, writing, informal discussions and group meetings. If possible some senior officials from donors, the FAO and WFP would be invited to participate for a few days to lecture and interact with program participants. Syllabi and course materials would be provided to participants in advance. As mentioned in the body of this report, a different training site would be used each year, so that a session would be geographically close to supporting donors on a rotating basis. In addition, instruction personnel would be drawn to insure a truly international flavor. The language of instruction would be, for practical reasons, either English or French.

Costs. The training consortium costs would include salary for a part-time coordinator, stipends for lecturers, purchase and reproduction costs for materials, and accomodation expenses during the session. A rough estimate for twenty-four people trained for two weeks with six instructional and support personnel would be:

coordinator:	\$10,000
instruction:	\$15,000
materials:	\$ 3,600
accomodations:	<u>\$42,000</u>
	\$70,600

Rationale. The proposed training session has two distinct advantages over

alternative in-service training available to donors presently. First, it would be more specialized to the needs of food aid officials. In the United States, for example, the Foreign Service Institute and Department of Agriculture's short courses occasionally offer relevant offerings, but seldom with the direct applicability possible from the proposed training program. Second, the training session affords an excellent opportunity for career officials to become acquainted with one another, to learn from each other, and to enhance their sense of professionalism.

## APPENDIX G -- BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## FOOTNOTES

1. On the rational calculus for this see, Robert O. Keohane, "The Demand for International Regimes," in Steven Krasner, ed. International Regimes (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983) pp. 141-172.
2. On this point see Kenneth Waltz, Theory of International Relations (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wellesley, 1979) and Stephen Krasner, editor, International Regimes op. cit. the articles by Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences," pp. 1-22 and Arthur A. Stein, "Coordination and Collaboration," pp. 45-140.
3. An elaboration of the basic arguments for improvements in collective welfare through information exchanges and coordination of policy is presented in Robert O. Keohane, After Hegemony (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984)
4. For a history of the origins of the US food aid program see Trudy H. Peterson, Agricultural Exports, Farm Income and the Eisenhower Administration, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979). Also see PL 480 Concessional Sales (Washington: U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Report # 142, December, 1977) and Janice E. Baker, Food for Peace 1954-1978 (Washington: Congressional Research Service, January 4, 1977).
5. Aspects of the Canadian program's history are described in Evaluation Assessments Canadian Food Aid Program, Vol. 1, Program Profiles (February, 1983)
6. This judgment rests on a unanimous views of eight current officials and several former ones from all three major donors.
7. On this point see Hugh Heclo, Government of Strangers (Washington: Brookings Institute, 1977) and Hugh Heclo et al, Comparative Public Policy (New York: 1983).
8. The World Bank is currently (September, 1984) considering substantial upgrading of the size and competency of their staff in Africa.
9. This assessment was offered by Mr. Wagner, Director of the Office in May, 1984.
10. See Assessing Food Aid Requirements: A Revised Approach (Rome: FAO, 1983)
11. This idea was discussed at a meeting in Washington of FAO, US AID, and Congressional officials in August, 1984.
12. Compare differences, for instance in the Food Aid in Figures (FAO: Rome, 1984) with the data reported in the Development Cooperation 1983 Review (Paris: OECD, 1983). The FAO used OECD data for the same years, but had more complete and somewhat different figures.
13. One example of the latter case surfaced at the May-June CFA meeting in 1984, at which the United States expressed strong reservations over a proposed World Food Program project for dairy development in Cuba. This project, as with all new WFP projects, had been placed before the CSD for the approval of its membership prior to CFA review. Not surprisingly the US indicated its reservations at this CSD stage, but did not block CSD approval. The CSD was simply not an arena for effective action.

14. See Stanley Please, Toward Sustained Development in Sub-Saharan Africa (Washington: World Bank, September, 1984) pp. 42-45.

15. Stanford is home for two of three principal authors of a major work, Food Policy, which was written drawing on the experience of training officials in Indonesia and other countries in the basic principles of food production, marketing and international trade. Peter Timmer, Walter Falcon, and Scott Pearson, Food Policy (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983). FRI has regularly had students from donor development agencies for a year or so working on their master's degree. The preponderance of students at FRI are oriented towards careers in voluntary or governmental organizations of donor countries or in governments of third world countries. The International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington is capable of providing certain types of short-term training.

16. This would avoid either the formal academic framework for conferences (which is usually boring) or the kind of adversarial proceedings, such as hearings, where an effort is made to assign "blame" to particular individuals or agencies for outcomes which are unsatisfactory.

17. This conclusion results from the study of Western economic summits by Robert Putman. Putman was a senior NSC staffer for summits and now chairs the Department of Government at Harvard University. See his "Summit Sense", Foreign Policy, no. 55, Summer, 1984, esp. pp. 90, and his book with Nicholas Bayne, Hanging Together: The Seven Power Summits (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

18. These are the conclusions of a study of policy coordination of Western powers in North-South bargaining. The role of international secretariats in shaping outcomes seems clearly greater among G-77 or smaller states. See Barbara B. Crane, "Policy Coordination by Western Powers," International Organizations vol. 38, no. 3 (Summer, 1984) pp. 399-428. Other relevant studies include Robert Rothstein, Global Bargaining (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979) and Raymond F. Hopkins, "Global Management Networks," International Journal of Social Science, vol. 30, no. 1, (Summer, 1978).