**Ethiopia: Food Security Beyond 2015**

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**CONTEXT**

- Famines occurred, on average, once per decade for centuries\(^1\)
- 1888-1892 famine may have resulted in the death of a third of the population,\(^2\) an estimated two million people\(^3\)
- 1896 famine in Tigray resulted in an estimated 40,000 deaths\(^4\)
- 1897 famine in Wollo resulted in up to 100,000 deaths\(^5\)
- 2004 famine resulted in an estimated 100,000 deaths\(^6\)

- An assessment of the national and international response for the 2002-2003 famine found it remarkable that there was no measurable increase of child mortality in this, Ethiopia's most extensive drought in modern history\(^7\)
- 22% of children suffer from severe stunting\(^n,1\)\(^8\)
- 30% of children are moderately underweight\(^9\)

- Seventy-five percent of children are severely underweight\(^\)\(^1\)\(^0\)
- Fifty-one percent of children suffer from moderate stunting\(^1\)\(^1\)
- Twenty-eight percent of children suffer from severe stunting\(^1\)\(^2\)

**THE "SILENT FAMINE"**

A silent famine of chronic under-nutrition and malnutrition often goes unnoticed. Tied to poverty and inequality, the scale is immense. Under-nutrition and malnutrition contribute to the following:

- One in every eleven children die before the age of five\(^1\)\(^3\)
- Eighty-five percent of children are moderately underweight\(^1\)\(^4\)
- Fourteen percent of children are severely underweight\(^1\)\(^5\)
- Fifty-one percent of children suffer from moderate stunting\(^1\)\(^6\)
- Twenty-eight percent of children suffer from severe stunting\(^1\)\(^7\)

**CHALLENGES AHEAD**

- Export-oriented agriculture creates vulnerability to market volatility
  - Greater shares of cereals are being sold on markets; 19% 1980-90, 28% 2001-08\(^3\)
- Equitable growth
  - The rising cost of basic goods, inflation and currency devaluation creates vulnerability to food insecurity unless policies and mechanisms ensure the gains made benefit all in society

**MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Significant reduction in number of people living in extreme poverty
  - 61% in 1991 to 39% in 2009\(^9\)
- Successful Land certification program
  - Resulting in increased investment, reduction of conflict, women's control of land have improved and yields have risen\(^1\)\(^8\),\(^n\)\(^9\)
- Effective and targeted social safety net
  - Predictable, multi-year transfers to protect assets supporting millions of people\(^1\)\(^9\),\(^10\)
- Rapid economic growth
  - One of the world's fastest growing economies from 2003 – 2013\(^1\)\(^2\)
- Expansion of infrastructure
  - Roads, telecommunications, electricity, schools and clinics throughout the country
- Regional research bodies as well as the Agricultural Transformation Agency are conducting field trials and research to strengthen the sector

**CONTESTED DEVELOPMENT**

- Resettlement Programs
  - Plans for the resettlement of over two million people; some suggesting the processes is voluntary and strengthens food security\(^1\)\(^3\),\(^1\)\(^4\) while others argue it is a violation of human rights and suggest the process serves investor interests\(^1\)\(^5\),\(^1\)\(^6\)
  - It is thought that resettlement programs began several years before the increase of commercial agricultural investments\(^1\)\(^7\),\(^1\)\(^8\)
- Large-scale hydroelectric dam projects
  - The road to food security is neither straight-forward nor easy.

**BEYOND 2015**

- Ethiopia has made significant progress in reducing starvation, hunger and malnutrition while strengthening food security in the country
- The country has experienced rapid economic growth and has invested in programs to strengthen and diversify the economy
- These gains can only be sustained and strengthened if opportunities are afforded to all and decision-making takes into account the vulnerabilities created and livelihoods negatively affected with some development projects
- Agricultural extension services have low adoption levels and must be more effective, this could be achieved if informed by participatory and contextualized research in order to strengthen food security and reduce vulnerability

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**HEADING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION**

- The 1999-2000 and 2002-2003 posed significant challenges. While the former may have resulted in 100,000 deaths,\(^3\) the latter resulted in 14 million people being in need of emergency food aid but the toll was limited to an estimated 300 deaths\(^3\)
- Caloric needs per day increased in rural areas from 1,900 in 1994/5 to 2,800 in 2004/5\(^3\)

**WORKS CITED**