Working for Sustainable Livelihoods and Food Security: Voices from the grassroots

ELENA MANCUSI-
MATERI

WORLD FOOD
PROGRAMME

ABSTRACT *Elena Mancusi-Materi interprets the outcomes of an international process of social mobilization around food security and sustainable livelihoods issues, arguing that the call for food security can be a rallying flag for community empowerment and democratization at the local and national level. The piece aims to convey the voice of grassroots communities from the economic South and the experience of those who work with them trying to foster sustainable livelihoods and food security.*

KEYWORDS *gender; governance; natural resources; rural development; social mobilization*

Sustainable livelihoods perspectives on food security: the SID approach

'Food Security, Social Mobilization and Community Empowerment' has been the title of an international campaign catalysed by the Society for International Development (SID) with the support of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and in partnership with national NGOs in 30 countries of the South over the period 1998–2000.

Beyond concerns of international solidarity, the project aims to highlight how the search for food security is deeply rooted in national perspectives and policies for sustainable livelihoods (SL). Mobilization of civil society is therefore essential to encourage upstream policy design, holistic approaches and participatory decision-making, calling for a shift in power relations as the key governance issue towards positive sustainable livelihoods and food security outcomes.

As food security is first and foremost a national issue, micro–macro linkages have to be carefully explored in order to bring community concerns into national policies and institutional mechanisms for food security. Within this framework, poverty and vulnerability become key issues for development *by* people themselves, focusing on their strengths rather than constraints, 'on what

people have and not only what they wish' (Singh, 2000). The project was built on the assumption that the call for food security can be a rallying flag for larger democratization processes, catalysing civil society movements towards greater transparency and accountability, forging new alliances at the civil society and government-CSOs level, enhancing grassroots/direct democracy processes, promoting local governments' capacity and responsible engagement in SL.

Empowerment of the poor and marginalized communities can be pursued by restoring their capacity (either in terms of resources control or possession of skills) to take charge of their life leading to their development as they envision it (Don Marquez and Debuque, 2000).¹ Networking, partnership and trust created by social mobilization are core elements of the social capital which is necessary for SL. More than 2500 people were engaged in the 30 national processes promoted by the SID-WFP project, built on national workshops where farmers' groups, women's organizations, local and national NGOs discussed grassroots perspectives on food security and SL. Policy guidelines for action resulting from the debate were then reviewed with local and national policy-makers, representatives of international agencies and journalists. On the basis that self-organization of the poor at the community level counters powerlessness as the central source of poverty (UNDP, 2000), these gatherings not only aimed to open up spaces for grassroots communities to voice their concerns and suggestions for food security and SL, but also took forward social mobilization for more responsible governance and democratization at the local and national level. One example was the establishment of a National Committee on Food Security as a result of the New Delhi workshop (26–27 June 2000), aiming to foster micro–macro linkages, and expanding people's space in decision-making, with a view to enhance food security and SL.

Key issues of food security

More than 800m people in the world are chronically undernourished. Although this number is about 10 percent less than it was in the 1970s, it is projected to hold steady at 680m in 2010 (FAO,

1996: 27). Project activities and experiences have led to a nuanced view of the causes at the root of food insecurity.² The evolution of a SL approach as a key concept for community empowerment and sustainable resource management is equally central to achieving food security. Gone are the days when emphasis was put on agricultural production, availability of stocks, technological upgrade and 'top down' approaches to food security. The focus is now on the impact that social structures, gender roles, management of natural resources, civil society participation and political strategies have on people's food and livelihoods' security.

Gender

The gender dimension of food security emerged in the majority of cases. Women and children are often discriminated against in the allocation of food at the household level. This was a strong complaint emerging in particular from the Bangladesh, Benin and El Salvador workshops. 'In polygamous marriages the most beloved wife is the one who prepares nicer meals for the man while herself and her children eat the littlest', highlighted one of the participants in the Benin event. Moreover, traditions and taboos in eating habits prevent women and children from consumption of particular food items. This is the case, for example, in rural Pakistan, where young girls are forbidden eggs in the belief this would anticipate their menarche. In South Africa – despite the relative wealth and national food security – malnutrition mainly affects pregnant and lactating mothers as well as young children. Severe child malnutrition in Benin is aggravated by the fact that children are allowed to eat only their parents' left-overs, and that it is highly disrespectful for children to eat meat or fish in front of their parents.

Women's poor access to productive resources, such as land and credit was also a major concern outlined by most of the communities engaged in the project. The impact of gender-biased inheritance rules and title deeds on food security was strongly felt in Nepal, Cameroon, Nigeria, Pakistan and Zimbabwe. In the latter case, customary and family law preventing women from inheriting and owning land was also seen in light of land

reallocation initiatives occurring in the country. Participants in the Harare workshop complained that the new inheritance law ignored land, and suggested women should be allowed Master Farmers training in order to access land for resettlement. With respect to women's access to credit, communities in Benin, Cameroon and Nigeria felt this should be encouraged. In all these cases the need for credit was combined with the appeal for enhanced access of women to education as necessary pre-conditions for diversification of activities. Noteworthy was the interest of rural women in Cameroon for the use of new information technologies.³

While access to credit and income generating activities is generally a strong factor for women's mobilization and empowerment – with very interesting outcomes in, for example, Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, India and Nepal – Pakistani women farmers thought that engagement in micro-credit schemes would only add to their chores and further overburden them. Women's overload and poor acknowledgement of their contribution to household food security was a frequent remark in all workshops. 'Motherhood should not be the only recognized value of women in society' stated one of the participants in the Pakistani workshop, while polygamy was listed as a coping strategy in Niger in order to ensure more women would contribute to the household's food security. Zimbabwe women lamented the overload deriving from provision of labour to the chiefs' welfare fields and home-based health care of family members affected by HIV/AIDS. In Cameroon allocation of agricultural activities is based on gender, still women felt their contribution to the household's food security was strongly dismissed. Poor acknowledgement of women's labour was also revealed by concerns on unequal wages in Pakistan and Nepal, which further deteriorate women's conditions.

Last but not least, Ugandan women felt that the increase in their workload resulted in reduced time for breast feeding and child care. Family planning was brought forward as a very thorny issue in a number of countries, among which Kenya, Nepal, Benin, Niger and to some extent El Salvador. In some cases women declared to prefer health hazards by harmful contraception rather than discussing the matter with their husbands; in other

cases women were generally ignorant on the issue and men very much against it.

Access to natural resources

Widespread community concerns on access to land, forests and water suggest the impact of unequal distribution and access to natural resources on people's food security. Issues of social justice and management of natural resources are central to equitable sustainable livelihoods and to improve food security at the community level. Contested access to land was the most common problem expressed by communities engaged in the project as the key determinant to food insecurity, often in combination with concerns on increasing scarcity of land for farming, soil erosion, desertification and urbanization pressure. In most of the developing world, land continues to be the main source of livelihoods, security and status. For these reasons, land is a determinant of power relations complicated by overlapping legal systems (e.g. state vs customary laws of indigenous communities), conflicting policies, complicated systems of tenancy and sub-tenancy, competing land use and increasing land conflicts.

Inequalities in access to, and use of, land underlined the need for agrarian reform in Cameroon, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Zambia, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Nicaragua. In Cameroon, the land tenure regime was described as the 'main obstacle to progress'. In Nepal, where 81 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture, the majority of which are landless farmers – and cropland is clearly used as a means of exploitation – participants in the Terai workshop recommended that the 'semi-feudal socio-economic structure be overcome and land be progressively redistributed'. Consistently, in Pakistan people suggested: 'Unused or misused state land should be distributed to small farmers [. . .] All untitled land owned by the army should be given to the landless [. . .] A limit to land ownership should be set at 12.5–50 acres'.

Requests for access to land were complemented by concerns on other natural resources, as in Niger where one of the participants stated 'Food security also means to drink'; 'Constructions should not happen on fertile land' (Kenya); 'Indiscriminate tree cutting and marketing of firewood is leading to

strong deforestation (Zimbabwe); 'Traditional cultural practices aggravate desertification, soil erosion and water scarcity' (Côte d'Ivoire); 'Indigenous people perceive recognition of rights over their original territories as the pre-condition for food security. Legal provisions for forest management are poor, especially with respect to indigenous areas' (Bolivia).

Overall, communities pledged for participatory management of natural resources, as forcefully advocated by the Indian communities:

The government should turn to the fields and learn how to build up people's food security and SL from the farmers [. . .] Centralized, industrialized, chemicalized and government controlled food systems should be replaced by localized, decentralized, community controlled and ecologically sustainable food systems [. . .] Landholding should be fragmented, traditional arrangements of community ownership should be revived with respect to land and water [. . .] Marketing of non-timber forest produce should be acknowledged as a livelihoods system of tribal communities [. . .] People's food security, tribal cultures and traditional lifestyles should be given precedence over forest tourism [. . .] Any change to the livelihoods system and resource base of the people should be made only with their informed consent [. . .] People's participation in natural resources management should be mandatory (Patna workshop, 29–30 April 2000).

In the same direction, the Terai meeting in Nepal concluded: 'Democratically elected community groups should be given ownership and responsibility for natural resources management and conservation'.

Culture

Pakistani groups meeting in Faisalabad advocated for 'recognition of the link among food, ecology, environment and culture'. Nonetheless, issues of identity and culture highlight a scenario of profound crisis affecting rural communities. This is revealed by a general disinterest of people, in particular the youth, towards engagement in agricultural activities. 'Young people dismiss work in the fields' highlight workshop participants gathering under a tree in Bagamoyo village, Tanzania. And more: 'Farmers should grow confident about their role in society' (Benin); 'Agricultural work force is mainly made up of old people applying

obsolete methods on a small scale. Farmers' Days celebrations and awards should be promoted to highlight the value of agricultural activities' (Ghana); 'Farmers' dignity should be enhanced. SL is about realizing not providing, i.e. it is about productive capacity and dignity, not welfare' (India).

In some cases this attitude may be a direct consequence of past development strategies focusing on industrialization and looking down on agriculture, and of economic policies depressing prices as a consequence of trade liberalization, withdrawal of subsidies, or national policies aiming to favour urban consumers (Mancusi-Materi and Amalric, 2000: 2). Communities suggest that further steps be taken to enhance engagement in agriculture, both at the level of cultural sensitization and financial inputs. Within this framework, the call for access of small farmers to credit and bank loans becomes particularly important and widespread. One of the most forceful statements in this direction comes from Nigeria 'All commercial banks should be compelled to allocate 15 percent of their loans to support agricultural activities'. As highlighted by the Patna workshop in India, 'Misplaced investment devalue traditional lifestyles and self-sufficient food systems'.

Parallel to farmers' lack of self-esteem and dismissal of agricultural activities, rural communities lamented a more general transformation in social relations. 'People are not aware of their potential and do not trust the others. Cultural values are being eroded and greed prevails over solidarity', was outlined in Benin. Consistently, other communities highlighted: 'Lack of co-operative spirit among farmers hinders success of group farming' (Cameroon) and 'Traditional safety nets are no longer in place and have not been replaced by other initiatives' (Kenya). Difficulty in identifying appropriate arrangements replacing traditional values and links was best epitomized by a Pakistani voice: 'Traditional solidarity and reciprocity values should not be replaced by micro-credit!'

'Food security should go beyond physiological need and imply consideration of culture and taste' was an important highlight from the Niger workshop. Changes in eating habits were often presented as a further indicator for cultural crisis. In most of the cases this was related to globalization of

food markets: 'Multinational food chains are hindering food culture, cooking practices and taste' (Pakistan); 'An aggressive consumerist society is emerging. Media spread consumerist drinking habits thus hindering nutritional value and economic benefits of natural traditional drinks' (India). More generally, the impact of foreign culture was strongly felt on households' eating habits: 'Reckless exploitation of natural resources and agricultural training in Europe hinder traditional knowledge and practices and lead to extinction of forest food-giving species, farm by-products etc.' (India); 'Industrialized countries try to change the features of Uganda soil so that our produce can best suit their food taste [. . .] Food coming from industrialized countries is thought to be better than local food' (Uganda).

In some cases, food aid was also identified as a factor contributing to changes in eating habits. This was particularly the case in Ghana, where communities feared it 'may shift taste away from local produce' and that 'the Ghana Standard Board should approve quality of food aid supplies'. This concern raises considerations on the self-targeting character of food aid, and on acceptability problems implied in distribution of unknown food items, or worse – food that is culturally labelled as inferior in particular local contexts. A countervailing argument comes from Côte d'Ivoire, where the long-term impact of food aid was deemed unsustainable as it would 'shift taste towards more expensive food items'.

On the whole, what people eat, how they cook, the way and the place where they prefer to feed themselves and their families is very much part of their sense of self. Food insecurity threatens people's identity and self-recognition. Whereas in some cases traditional practices have been recognized as detrimental to food security (e.g. in Tanzania, 'Ritual dances implying food waste should be discouraged'), communities generally advocated for enhancement of the value of traditional eating habits and local food. Such needs often crystallized around issues of intellectual property rights (see below).

Production and distribution

Calls for enhanced technology (mainly irrigation and storage facilities) and a lively debate on bio-

intensive vs chemical agriculture were the main thrusts of discussion on production issues. Although it was generally acknowledged local practices, technologies and knowledge systems should not be displaced by introduction of new technologies, a number of African communities highlighted a strong need for enhanced technological skills and access. Within this framework, they also hoped more accessible prices could be put in place for purchase and increased use of improved seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. Unsustainable price of chemical inputs was also lamented by other communities in South America and all over South Asia. In these cases though the approach was somehow different, and communities advocated for widespread adoption of bio-intensive organic farming. On the basis that 'Chemical inputs are becoming always more expensive and eroding the economic base of farming households', Nepali farmers observed: 'Chemical fertilizers are the major cause of soil degradation and food insecurity; they spoil the taste of food grains and tubers. . . land slides are also increasing'. In the same direction, Pakistani communities highlighted: 'Indiscriminate use of chemicals is leading to soil infertility and hindering health; insects have grown immune to insecticides [. . .] It takes some time to have good harvests when switching to organic farming as soil fertility has been destroyed by chemical inputs'.

Food security was also often seen in terms of inadequate distribution within countries rather than as a problem of low production. Within this framework remoteness was a big issue, calling for improved road networks and transport in almost all the countries surveyed. Also safety of community life came into question – for example: 'Vehicles carrying foodstuffs are likely to be robbed on the way' (Cameroon); 'Farmers fight with transhumant shepherds seeking feed for their livestock' (Côte d'Ivoire) – as well as large scale conflicts and war: 'The farming system has been disrupted by civil strife. Dislocated people have to ask for allocation of land from neighbouring or even distant tribes' (Uganda); 'Refugees and their hosts suffer from strong food insecurity [. . .] Food insecurity is a major threat to peace both within and outside the country' (Côte d'Ivoire).

But, first and foremost, the linking issue between production and distribution was the one of commercialization. Within this framework, the impact of trade on food security was reviewed not only in light of access to local markets but also very much in connection with international trade regulations. Here again, the relation between culture and food security became particularly relevant.

The 'local market scenario' looked particularly grimy in many cases, again for difficulties in physically accessing it but also for distortions deriving from the middlemen system. 'Middlemen take advantage of farmers' poor access to the market and offer them very low prices' (Zimbabwe); 'Middlemen taking care of marketing deprive farmers of a big share of their proceeds' (Ghana). With a view on the long-term effect of such system, Tanzanian farmers pointed out 'High prices offered by private companies or individual businessmen seduce farmers to sell all their food crops without putting any reserve aside towards the next harvest season'. This observation also recalled the controversial shift from cultivation of food crops to cash crops, not only for its immediate impact on households' food security but also for the damage on productive capacity: 'A major shift is occurring in resettlement areas from food crops to cash crops, hindering food security both at the household and national level' (Zimbabwe); 'Crop rotation is not applied' (Kenya); 'The traditional calendar of agricultural activities is not applied [. . .] Diversification of crops should be spread to counter soil erosion' (Cameroon). And, moving into the realm of international trade, 'Benin is an agricultural country but produce is almost entirely focused on cotton, which amounts to 88 percent of exports' (Benin). But, as a participant in the Bolivia workshop sadly pointed out 'Market dynamics require competition and farmers cannot afford to lose capital invested in crop diversification'.

Discussion on access to international markets clustered around two main arguments, that is the need to protect local produce and the request for indigenous intellectual property rights. On the former issue, trade liberalization in agricultural produce was generally opposed. This was not only based on the ground that 'Import of food that is locally produced should be discouraged by means of

high taxation [. . .] Although we were founding members of WTO our products are still banned on EU markets' (Uganda), but also that 'Trade liberalization brings about dumping of unsafe products, while local producers are exposed to international quality, pricing and safety standards' (Ghana). And, Zambian groups considerably suggested: 'A transition should be explored in liberalization policies ensuring pre-eminence of the right to food security and food sovereignty over macro-economic policies'.

Still more forcefully, grassroots communities in the project made their point on the hindrances that patenting of life would have on people's livelihoods and culture. On the basis that 'Ethic principles should be adopted in food processing and marketing' (Peru) and 'Traditional knowledge should become intellectual property of local communities' (Bolivia), Pakistani groups went on saying:

Seed patenting and TRIPs strongly hinder biodiversity while impoverishing communities that still rely on pre-industrial agriculture systems. Corporate seed monopolies will impose monoculture and damage livelihood of millions of farmers. Seed patenting particularly hinders women's livelihoods as one of their prime roles in food security is that they are the guardians of seeds (Faisalabad workshop, 26–27 March 2000).

And in India:

Farmers should be free to produce and distribute seeds. Also they should be given the right to sue seed companies and obtain compensation if seeds fail to deliver the promised harvest [. . .] MNCs act as middlemen and make money out of the country's genetic endowment [. . .] Patenting of life is offensive. Cultural and genetic diversity should be preserved (Bangalore, Patna and New Delhi workshops).

Food aid

Although the importance of food aid was widely acknowledged, a number of communities seemed to fear dependancy syndromes in the community and controversial impact on food habits. In a few cases misleading practices in distribution were highlighted, for example 'Distribution of food aid should be decentralized and adequate mechanisms should be put in place to prevent political instrumentalization of food aid' (Peru); 'National food aid is often mismanaged' (South Africa); and

'International agencies granting food aid should directly deal with rural communities instead of going through national institutions' (Burkina Faso). Conversely targeting was generally deemed quite appropriate, with the only exception of Uganda where participants remarked: 'Food aid primarily targets displaced people and refugees rather than victims of poverty'.

Very importantly, Ugandan communities hinted at the need for enhanced provision of food aid for development, beyond emergency situations. This is confirmed by a number of positive experiences on the impact that Food for Work (FFW) and more generally food for development programmes have had on social mobilization and empowerment of grassroots communities:

WFP Food for Work programmes have assisted communities overcome famine in 1994 and 1997, boosted social mobilization for development and responsibility, enhanced health and education, and improved early warning systems. Volume of aid is now decreasing as civil society is becoming more and more organized (Sadoré workshop, Niger, 17 November 1999).

Participation in Food for Work programmes has been instrumental not only in improving nutrition and infrastructure to the direct benefit of communities engaged, but also fostered processes of social clustering and mobilization. People felt that they were acquiring skills and participated in collective work for the first time, which enhanced their sense of ownership and enhanced unity in the community. Empowerment processes catalyzed by FFW programmes continued beyond completion of project activities. Rural communities went ahead building schools, kindergartens and health posts in their remote localities. They also undertake projects to have drinking water, building food stocking houses and repairing roads (Cacaopera workshop, El Salvador, 18 November 1999).

Implementation of WFP Food for Development programmes has promoted social mobilization and rural development, improved management of natural resources, supported construction of schools and primary health care posts and enhanced production (Ouagadougou workshop, Burkina Faso, 11–12 May 2000).

Policy guidelines for action

Listening to these voices, one can clearly hear a call to democratize development. Focus on agricultural

output, innovation and 'experts-down' approaches to food security have been largely replaced by the community need to participate in their own development and shape it consistently with their vision and aspirations. The success of the project can be measured, not so much in the solution to the myriad problems of food insecurity, but even more by the extent of community involvement and mobilization to solve what they perceived as their critical needs.

Communities engaged in the project elaborated detailed guidelines for action in the attempt to impact future elaboration of local and national food security strategies. Here again, particular suggestions vary across different areas and conditions of distress. Nonetheless the need to strengthen civil society, facilitate share of information and enhance community participation in decision-making were the key issues underlying all local requests for sustainable livelihoods and food security. Furthermore, communities called for both horizontal networking and partnership with the government, which remains to be seen as a main actor in the food security domain. Therefore the search for food security ends up catalyzing calls for political democratization as a follow-up to the pleas for social and economic democratization illustrated earlier.

Strengthening civil society includes the legal/institutional dimension of civil society organization, and the practical implications that establishment of links implies at the community level. Consistently, some localities felt the need to advocate for establishment of a basic framework of mobilization: 'Legal conditions should be improved to facilitate establishment and sustainability of NGOs' (Yemen); 'NGOs have an interesting potential, they should be allowed to put it in practice' (Tunisia); 'Lack of a common reference document giving the same chances and same constraints to all NGOs implies poor solidarity among grassroots organizations. In this situation, they are easily separated by the search for economic and political opportunities' (Haiti). Interestingly, disengagement of the state and functional decentralization does not automatically facilitate integration of civil society in policy-making: 'Local authorities in rural areas are still used to the very strong role of the State . . .

they are not willing to let NGOs work beside them' (Tunisia). And, on the other hand, 'NGOs should not behave as anti-governmental organizations' (Benin). Cases of corruption, inefficiency and poor political will were widely reported and project participants generally agreed that 'Communities should be acknowledged as key stake-holders in elaboration and implementation of food security policies and programmes' (Nepal, South Africa). Nonetheless the state was still seen as an important actor, not to intervene directly, rather to facilitate processes of social mobilization for development and namely food security. And even in contexts where civil society is already highly organized, partnership with the state is still a central concern of grassroots communities in the search for food security.

In parallel, communities in almost all the countries highlighted the need to strengthen local organizations such as co-operatives, farmers' groups, women's organizations, community clusters and so forth. This was common to communities experiencing some kind of cultural crisis ('Leadership does play a key role in grassroots development but we do not see ourselves as possible leaders, we do not think leaders can be found among us' – participants in the Kisii, workshop, Kenya) and to those ready to regenerate their local values ('We have indigenous parliaments. . . but do we have

representatives in the National Assembly? We were born to be leaders and we are the ones who represent the community! – an indigenous woman in the Somoto workshop, Nicaragua). The desire to link up with other people, enhance solidarity and responsibility at the community level included strong calls for enhanced information on best practices and success stories to be spread in local languages and through means easily accessible to the poor. It also implied the wish to feel part of a larger community, share experiences, celebrate the value of those working in the fields thereby restoring farmers' dignity.

As a result, people suggested decision-making power should be shifted closer to poor communities also through enhancement of direct/grassroots democracy processes, local governments' capacity and responsible engagement in SL. Community participation in policy making was deemed necessary to ensure responsibility, transparency, accountability and good governance as key factors to attain food security and sustainable livelihoods. Calling for a shift in power relations, communities advocated for recognition of the human right component of food security and 'bottom up' approaches to policy design as a way of administering and managing social affairs on democratic principles.

Notes

- 1 The integral paper is available upon request from the SID Secretariat. Also please visit <www.angoc.ngo.phil> for further information on publications and programmes of the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC).
- 2 Detailed outcomes of national processes are reviewed in Mancusi-Materi and Amalric (2000), available upon request from the SID Secretariat.

- 3 For further information please contact Roland Kwemain <adcome_buea@yahoo.com>, SID Douala Chapter, Cameroon.

References

- Don Marquez, N. and Debuque, M.T.L. (2000) 'The Challenge of Empowerment'. Paper presented at the Responsible Governance for Sustainable Livelihoods and Food Security session, Global Dialogue 2, Expo 2000, Hanover, 1–3 July 2000.

- FAO (1996) *Food, Agriculture and Food Security: The Global Dimension*. Document WFS 96/Tech 1. Rome: FAO.
- Mancusi-Materi, E. and F. Amalric (2000) *Democratic Quests for Food Security – Report from a series of national workshops on Food Security, Social Mobilization and Community Empowerment*. Rome: SID.
- Singh, N. (2000) personal communication.
- UNDP (2000) *Overcoming Human Poverty: UNDP Poverty Report 2000*. New York: UNDP.

SID–WFP initiative on Food Security, Social Mobilization and Community Empowerment: list of main partner organizations and contacts

Bangladesh: Ghulam Sattar, BRAC <bracamr@bdmail.net> and Khandaker Mahmudur Rahman, SID Sylhet Chapter <fivdbdkh@citechco.net>

Benin: Elsie Assogba, Songhai Centre <elsie@songhai.org>

Bolivia: Pablo Cuba and Ligia Muguértégui, SID Cochabamba Chapter and Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social (CERES) <ceres@albatros.cnb.net>

Burkina Faso: André-Eugène Ilboudo, Secrétariat Permanent des ONG (SPONG) and Association Vive le Paysan <aeugene@fasonet.bf>

Cameroon: Roland Kwemain and Laurent Tetang, SID Douala Chapter <sid_Cameroon@hotmail.com> with the support of Association for Development Communication and Environment (ADCOME) <adcome_buea@yahoo.com>, and University of Buea

Côte d'Ivoire: Ano Boa Bernard, Tha-meri <thameri@altern.org>

El Salvador: José Armando Oliva, Fundasal <fundasal@sal.gbm.net> and Ms. Ana Francis Góngora <anagongora@yahoo.com>

Ghana: Miranda Greenstreet, African Association for Health, Environment and Development (AAHEAD) <aahhead@libr.ug.edu.gh> and Charles Abbey, African Development Programme (ADP) <chasadp@africaonline.com.gh> with the support of Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration <gimpa2@africaonline.com.gh>

Haiti: Yves André Wainright, Plateforme de Plaidoyer pour un Développement Alternatif (PAPDA) <sec-alimentaire@papda.org> <yawainright@email.com>

India: Smitu Kothari and Parshuram Ray, Lokayan <lokayan@vsnl.com>, Narayan Banerjee, Centre for Women's Development Studies <cwdslib@sansad.nic.in> and Pitabasa Sahoo, Institute for Development of Backward Regions <pitabasa52@hotmail.com>

Kenya: Mary Omosa, New Opportunities Network <maryomosa@netscape.net> with the support of the Institute of Development Studies.

Malawi: Shyley Kondowe, Malawi Institute for Democratic and Economic Affairs (MIDEA) <midea@malawi.net>

Mali: Soumana Doumbia, Centre National d'Appui et de Formation pour le Développement des Ressources Humaines (CENAFOD) <iadd@malinet.ml> and Sunny Akhuopa, Bamako SID Chapter <aadc52@lotmail.com>

Mozambique: Ismael Ossemane, União Nacional de Camponeses (UNAC) <unac@zebra.uem.mz>

Nepal: Binayak Rajbhandari, Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC) <worec@healthnet.org.np> <binayakrajbhandari@hotmail.com> with the support of Sarba Raj Khadka, Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN) <rrn@healthnet.org.np>, Ghanashayam Awasthi, ECARDS <dp@ecards.wlink.com.np> and Ojaswi Gautam, Pro-Public <fppic@fppipc.wlink.com.np>.

Nicaragua: Gladys Cáceres de Alvarez, Instituto de Promoción Humana (INPHRU) <inprhuso@ibw.com.ni>

Niger: Hama Seyni, Réseau MARP (Méthode Active de Recherche et de Planification Participative) <hamarp@intnet.ne>

Nigeria: Stephen Bola Oni, SID Zaria Chapter <sbolaoni@abu.edu.ng>

Pakistan: Shahid Zia, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) <shahid@sdpi.org> with the support of Sustainable Agriculture Action Group.

Peru: Ana Maria Acevedo, Fomento de la Vida (FOVIDA) <aacevedo@fovida.org.pe>

Senegal: Yéro Sylla and Alioune Watt, Société Africaine d'Education et de Formation pour le Développement (SAFEFOD) <safefod@cyg.sn>

South Africa: Gerrie Albertse and Roberta Burgess, Agriculture Research Council (ARC) <gerrie@NVBIJ1.agric.za>

Tanzania: Ms. Mwajuma Masaiganah <masaigana@africaonline.co.tz> and Mbutu Agriculture Society (MAS).

Tunisia: Corinne Kumar and Mohsen Marzouk, El Taller <eltaller@gnet.tn>

Uganda: Wamuyu Gakenia Maina, Institute of Public Health <wamuyu_m@hotmail.com> with the support of James Ssemwanga, Ssemwanga Centre <ssemwang@swiftuganda.com>

Yemen: Jihad al-Jeda, Scientific Council for Systems and Applied Sciences (SCSAS) <scsas@y.net.ye> <ALBA@Y.NET.YE>

Zambia: Freda Luhila, Programme Against Malnutrition (PAM) <pam@zamnet.zm> <fluhila@yahoo.com>

Zimbabwe: Fiona Mwashita, Zimbabwe Women's Bureau (ZWB) <zwbtac@africaonline.co.zw> with the support of IRED and ZERO.