DEFENSE THREAT REDUCTION AGENCY
Scientific & Technical Review Information

PA CONTROL NUMBER:	PA 10-273 11 May 10	SUSPENSE: 10 June 2010
PM / PHONE / EMAIL:	Nicole Whealen/ 767-6354	DATE: 11 May 2010
BRANCH CHIEF / PHONE /EMAIL:		
DIVISION CHIEF / PHONE:	William Hostyn/767-4453	DATE: 11 May 10
DIRECTORATE / DIRECTOR /PHONE	John T. Byrd / 767-	DATE: 11 May 10
ENTERPRISE / OFFICE / PHONE:		DATE:
PUBLIC AFFAIRS:	Richard Cole, Chief / Juanita Y Gaines	16 Jun 10

1. TTLE: African Security Challenges: Now and Over the Horizon... (contd)   CONTRACT NUMBER

ORIGINATOR Jen Perry (ASCO); Jennifer Borchard (SAIC)

2. TYPE OF MATERIAL: [X] PAPER [ ] PRESENTATION [ ] ABSTRACT [ ] OTHER

3. OVERALL CLASSIFICATION: [X] CONTRACTOR UNCLASS   [X] PROJECT MANAGER UNCLASS

A. Review authority for unclassified material is the responsibility of the PM. Your signature indicates the material has undergone technical and security review. [ ] FRD   [ ] CNWDI   [ ] NATO RELEASABLE

B. Warning Notices/Caveats: [ ] RD
[ ] SUBJECT TO EXPORT CONTROL LAWS

C. Distribution Statement:

[X] A. Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited (unclassified papers only).

CLEARED for public release

[ ] B. Distribution authorized to U.S. Government agencies only; (check the following):

[ ] Contractor Performance Evaluation	[ ] Proprietary Information
[ ] Foreign Government Information	[ ] Test and Evaluation
[ ] Administrative or Operational Use	[ ] Software Documentation
[ ] Specific Authority	[ ] Critical Technology
[ ] Premature Dissemination	

JUN 16 2010

**Public Affairs
Defense Threat Reduction Agency**

[ ] C. Distribution authorized to U.S. Government agencies and their contractors: (check the following):

[ ] Critical Technology	
[ ] Specific Authority	[ ] Software Documentation
[ ] Administrative or Operational Use	[ ] Foreign Government Information

[ ] D. Distribution authorized to the Department of Defense and U.S. DoD Contractors only; (check the following):

[ ] Foreign Government Information	[ ] Software Documentation
[ ] Critical Technology	[ ] Foreign Government Information
[ ] Administrative or Operational Use	

[ ] E. Distribution authorized to DoD Components only; (check the following):

[ ] Administrative or Operational Use	[ ] Software Documentation
[ ] Premature Dissemination	[ ] Specific Authority
[ ] Critical Technology	[ ] Proprietary Information
[ ] Foreign Government Information	[ ] Test and Evaluation
[ ] Direct Military Support	[ ] Contractor Performance Evaluation

[ ] F. Further dissemination only as directed.

[ ] G. Distribution authorized to U.S. Government agencies and private individuals or enterprises eligible to obtain export-controlled technical data in accordance with DoD Directive 5230.25 (unclassified papers only).

4. MATERIAL TO BE: [ ] Presented [X] Published   Date Required: 10 June 2010

Name of Conference or Journal: (contd) Food Security and Conflict: Current and Future Dimensions of the Challenge in Africa

Remarks: To be published on the ASCO website and distributed as needed

DTRA Form 58 (Jun 06) (Adobe LiveCycle ES)

AFRICAN SECURITY CHALLENGES:

NOW AND OVER THE HORIZON

FOOD SECURITY AND CONFLICT: CURRENT AND FUTURE DIMENSIONS OF THE CHALLENGE IN AFRICA

WORKING GROUP DISCUSSION REPORT

Jennifer Perry
Defense Threat Reduction Agency

Jennifer Borchard
Science Applications International Corporation

African Security Challenges: Now and Over the Horizon

Food Security and Conflict: Current and Future Dimensions of the Challenge in Africa

WORKING GROUP DISCUSSION REPORT

Jennifer Perry
Defense Threat Reduction Agency

Jennifer Borchard
Science Applications International Corporation

April 2010

Acknowledgements:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1:
BACKGROUND

On February 6, 2007, U.S. President George W. Bush directed the establishment of a new Combatant Command focused on Africa.   The announcement of U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) kindled a flurry of discussion amongst Africa watchers in Washington, DC and beyond. Debate largely centered on the implications of this announcement, the mission of the new Command, its location, and above all, how USAFRICOM actions would reconcile with those of other players in the region and whether the decision signified a militarization of U.S. policy in the region.

Irrespective of this debate, the establishment of the Command reflects several important changes in U.S. Government, particularly U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) perceptions about the importance of Africa to U.S. strategic interests. Previously, three geographic Combatant Commands (COCOMs) shared responsibility for Africa, a situation that sometimes resulted in fragmented action in the region. USAFRICOM's almost continent-wide responsibility allows the DoD to assume a comprehensive approach as it addresses security challenges on the continent, suggests an increasing recognition of the commonalities across African states and regions, and serves as an acknowledgement that many security concerns and obstacles, as well as their root causes and effects, transcend these physical boundaries.   The Command's interagency component also suggests a greater recognition of the need for consistent coordination of U.S. activities to address these security challenges. The DoD is but one player in the region and must consistently work with other U.S. Government departments and agencies to support broader activities in the region when appropriate.

With this heightened interest and attention in mind, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's Advanced Systems and Concepts Office (DTRA/ASCO) initiated a fundamental research assessment of African security challenges – what they are today and what they might be over the horizon. This assessment could be used to inform future planning and research for ASCO, and inform those U.S. Government players active in the region, including, but not limited to the newest form of DoD engagement, USAFRICOM.

Research Objective and Approach

It is important to note that the vision for this project at the outset was to study USAFRICOM's mission and structure and determine how these would affect the way that the Command addressed security challenges in the region. When it was determined that many conferences, workshops, and publications had already addressed this topic (coupled with the fact that the USAFRICOM mission and structure were still being refined as it stood up), the research team realized that a broader and more fundamental "challenges-centric" assessment was needed. Indeed, many players were rightly investigating the "nuts and bolts" of USAFRICOM and other U.S. engagement in the region (specifically how that might be affected by the stand-up of the new Command), yet few were conducting a comprehensive assessment of what security challenges those players might need to address today and in the

future. The research team felt an "over the horizon" aspect was especially important and an area in which our research could inform future strategic planning.

The research objective was to define the major categories of security challenges in Africa today and explore possibilities for what they might be over the horizon. Using fundamental insights from academic and research experts to develop a better understanding of those challenges, the research was intended to explore how the challenges intersect and identify their importance for U.S., especially USAFRICOM, activities and engagement on the continent. This research would provide a platform for further study of how the United States can address the identified challenges through various (and ideally coordinated) forms of engagement, including USAFRICOM.

To accomplish this objective, the research team performed academic literature and expert reviews to identify a large list of African security challenges with the recognition that there is some debate among experts on the challenge areas and their importance relative to one another. The team also surveyed U.S. Government strategic documents (including USAFRICOM mission and vision statements) to obtain a list of those challenges the government identifies as important. Eventually, this list was pared down to three broad categories of challenges and served as a foundation for an academic workshop at which the security challenges were discussed in October 2008.[1]

1. Transnational security issues
    a. Small arms/light weapons
    b. Maritime security
    c. Disease

2. Internal and regional conflict
    a. Border issues, spread of conflict, and peacekeeping
    b. Humanitarian assistance, refugees, and internally-displaced persons
    c. Rebels
    d. Post-conflict reconstruction issues

3. Potential flashpoints/future security challenges
    a. Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and R&D developments
    b. Oil and natural resource competition and exploitation
    c. Terrorism and radical Islam
    d. China and other states

While the approach to the challenges selection was not scientific, the research team viewed this research project as a starting point and not an end point in the study. The workshop in October 2008 provided a foundation for more in-depth and specific discussions and research on major security challenges and their implications; it also pointed the research

---

[1] The list was pared down for both practical and budgetary reasons. That is, the research team needed to conduct a one day workshop with academic experts and therefore tried to select challenges that could be discussed within that timeframe, but that would also allow for broad participation among many types of experts. It also selected challenges of particular interest to the sponsoring organization (DTRA/ASCO) and incorporated some challenges that might not be viewed as important today, but that could dramatically affect the security landscape tomorrow.

team to several issues involving government and academic debate. Additionally, it highlighted the need to consider various methodologies to discuss security challenges among these two groups to ensure effective discussion. Indeed, it was also widely understood that one study would not be enough to accurately and comprehensively capture the challenges that make up the African security environment.

After the October 2008 workshop, the research team selected four specific challenges, or in some cases combined ones, from the above challenge list to receive more in depth attention by way of working group discussions and analytic papers over the course of the next several months. Participants at these working group discussions would focus on the current and possible future nature of a specific challenge, for example, small arms and light weapons, and how it might intersect with others. They would also preliminarily consider the implications of this challenge for U.S. engagement on the continent. In particular, participants would focus on the dimensions of the challenge that might be manipulated and issues associated with that manipulation.

The initial topics selected for further study included: weapons of mass destruction, small arms and light weapons, disease, and refugees and militancy.[2] In January 2010, based on inputs from USAFRICOM staff members, the research team also selected two additional topics for further study, given the success of the previous discussions. These included food security and conflict and, departing slightly from previous research topics, challenges, issues, and approaches in improving African security through the use of non/less-than-lethal force due to interest within Command.. After the topical discussions, the research team would conduct additional activities to synthesize results to date, get additional inputs, and consider the "so what?" question for engagement on the continent in greater depth.

The report that follows outlines the results of the fifth working group discussion session that focused on food security and conflict. As such, this report should be viewed as one element of the research endeavor on African security challenges with complete results and findings still pending.

---

[2] These topics were selected for several reasons. They were the subject of broad debate at the October 2008 workshop or similar events, of interest to the sponsoring organization, and/or lacked extensive study within the U.S. Department of Defense.

SECTION 2:
WORKING GROUP DISCUSSION SESSION OBJECTIVES, SUCCESSES, AND DIFFICULTIES

Objectives

DTRA/ASCO invited a small group of experts on the dimensions of the food security and conflict challenge in Africa to participate in a working group discussion to better define the nature of the threat, the possible implications for U.S. engagement, and the ways in which the threat (if deemed important) could be addressed through activities on the continent. It is important to note that the starting point assumption was that there were both traditional and human security dimensions to the challenge in Africa, though the workshop organizers acknowledged that security was not the only dimension of the challenge which must be considered when analyzing and responding to the challenge.

As the fifth in a series of working sessions on specific security challenges, this working session, like the others, had a secondary objective. Experiences at the October 2008 workshop suggested that there are some difficulties associated with conducting government and academic dialogue on security challenges. This was especially apparent when analyzing the different priorities and approaches taken by the two communities to assess security challenges. One question that revealed the different priorities of the communities, for example, is the issue of whether to consider the root causes of the security challenge area or only their effects. Further, what are the implications of that decision for formulating and implementing policy and related activities in the challenge area? This working session served as one test case to refine ways to facilitate government and academic dialogue in such a way that can most effectively inform strategic planning and understanding while reflecting the analytic complexities of the study topics.[3]

Working Group Discussion Structure

Participants

The core meeting participants were largely drawn from the academic sector. The five experts each represented a non-military U.S university and had a publishing record on some aspect of food security and conflict challenges in Africa and/or recent experience examining such issues on the ground in Africa through field research. Only one of these five experts had extensive experience interacting with the U.S. national security community on these issues.   The other meeting participants contributing to the discussion and/or observing it were drawn from the U.S. Government and contractor sector. This included representatives from USAFRICOM, DTRA, and the Foreign Agriculture Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture with a broad understanding of African security challenges in general and/or African food security issues specifically.

---

[3] For a more detailed discussion of this topic, please see the first workshop report from this study, *African Security Challenges: Now and Over the Horizon* (ASCO Report 2009 001).

Agenda

The working group session was comprised of plenary discussions and presentations, an admitted departure from previous working group discussions in this series. In advance of the meeting, the research team tasked each of the five academic participants with developing a presentation that addressed a particular aspect of the challenge area from a particular perspective and that would serve as a catalyst for a broad group discussion on the current and/or future dimensions of the food security and conflict challenge in Africa. The presentations were offered in an order designed to accommodate a deductive analysis of the issues.

After each presentation, the participants contributed to a discussion of the ideas presented in the talk with the overall goal of more broadly identifying those dimensions of the challenge which need to be considered and understood in the African context (particularly in decision making environments) and the issues associated with the analysis of the challenge. Finally, the workshop organizers held an additional moderated discussion on issues surrounding the United States' and partnered traditional and human security-focused engagement on food security and conflict challenges in Africa. A representative from USAFRICOM offered an overview briefing to facilitate an equal understanding among all participants about how the U.S. Department of Defense, through the Command, supports U.S. security engagement in the region prior to this discussion. The discussion was designed to address the following questions:[4]

> ➢ How might African and U.S. Government perceptions of the challenge area, including differences between them, shape the way in which the challenge area is addressed over the long-term and the success and failure of responses?   Are there differences among African state governments and/or civil society in how they perceive this challenge area and if so, what are these differences generally speaking?

> ➢ What issues should be discussed when determining the contribution of U.S. Government players to address the security dimensions of this challenge area? What role might the United States Africa Command have over the long-term in supporting U.S. engagement in this area?

> ➢ What are some alternative or additional security-based approaches to U.S. engagement in this area that might be leveraged to address emerging food security and conflict challenges in Africa?

> ➢ What are some ways the U.S. Government can partner with other actors (other state governments, non-government and/or international organizations) to address food security and conflict challenges in Africa? What issues might the U.S. Government need to address when considering these partnership opportunities?

After the working session, the research team drafted this report to summarize the broader findings of the group. The meeting participants were offered an opportunity to review the report prior to publication to ensure it captured the discussion, including dissenting viewpoints, accurately.

---

[4] Though the participants considered elements of several of these questions during the discussion period, the discussion that actually emerged did not specifically focus on all of these questions.

Meeting the Objectives: Difficulties and Successes

Success: The organizers were successful in convening a highly respected small group of experts who have analyzed the security dimensions of the food security and conflict challenge in Africa and who could consider the nature of the threat and response options.

Discussion: The academic experts had extensive experience conducting highly-respected research efforts on various aspects of the problem in Africa. Most had focused this research with a particular lens of analysis (anthropology, human rights, political science, development, for example) and on a particular manifestation of the challenge regionally within Africa (Central Africa and the Horn of Africa, for example) or thematically (complex emergencies, for example). These varying focuses allowed for a fuller discussion of the points of intersection among many of the dimensions of the security challenge. Some of the academic experts had also conducted studies on the global dimension of the food security and conflict problem. This allowed for a full discussion of the analytic complexities associated with studying these issues in any region, including Africa. This brought the discussion to a higher level.

With one exception, the academic experts had never offered consulting or research services to the U.S. Government in this area or supported related "on the ground" activities. As a result, they were not particularly experienced with considering the practicalities of U.S. Government engagement on this security challenge. The advantage of this unfamiliarity was that the discussion that emerged offered some fresh perspectives on response challenges which may not have otherwise been brought forth given a different pool of expert participants.

Difficulty: Discussion of the issues surrounding U.S. and partner engagement on the security challenge was not as detailed as the discussion of the nature of the challenge.

Discussion: As noted previously, the group of experts selected to participate in this meeting were generally not as experienced with considering ways to practically respond to the food security and conflict challenge within a U.S. Government decision making/engagement framework as they were in analyzing the nature of the challenge.

Though the discussion on engagement issues would have been strengthened by additional involvement of more U.S. Government actors dealing with the food security and conflict space, such as personnel from the U.S. Agency for International Development, the value of this discussion was higher than in several of the previous working group discussion sessions on other challenge areas. Several representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture made a positive contribution to the discussion and a Command Briefing from a representative from USAFRICOM allowed for all of the experts to establish a baseline familiarity with this new form of U.S. engagement in the region, ultimately allowing for a deeper and more nuanced discussion on engagement issues.

There was a concern that the added formality (presentations and/or participation from other government actors) could result in a situation in which the academic/out of the box flavor of the discussion was overshadowed or minimized. While the approach taken in this discussion session did not solve all of these issues, it did demonstrate the importance of maintaining a balance between engagement discussions and those based in theory.

SECTION 3:
OVERALL THREADS OF DISCUSSION

The participants broadly agreed on the importance of analyzing food security and conflict issues in Africa because they have a broad impact on the African security environment today and quite likely over the long-term. However, they stressed that while there is a cyclical relationship between food insecurity and conflict in Africa, food insecurity is not a necessary condition for conflict to emerge. In some cases, the most food insecure countries are not the most violent. Likewise, conflict does not need to present for food insecurity situations to arise. Uses of food power as a foreign or domestic policy tool, for example, are not limited to conflict situations. There are no examples of international actors *successfully* using food power to cause changes in the political behavior of another state government and limited examples of international actors attempting it in Africa.   However, this practice needs to be examined because food power attempts, even if unsuccessful in achieving stated objectives, can increase suffering among vulnerable populations.

There are many kinds of food security crises in Africa requiring attention that do not include a conflict element; for example, food insecurity can result from natural disasters. However, the line between natural disasters and conflicts is increasingly blurred as natural disasters can occur in conflict zones and, in some cases, create conditions for conflict. Overall, conflict should be viewed as one of the major causal factors for food insecurity in Africa.

Three relationships may need to be examined when considering the relationship between food insecurity and conflict in Africa. First, conflict may give rise to food insecurity. Second, food insecurity may give rise to conflict. Finally, root causes may give rise to both food insecurity and conflict.

The first relationship, conflict giving rise to food insecurity, is the one that is most understood and the one where the most direct linkages between variables can be observed. Several issues need to be examined in this instance including: African actors manipulating access to and use of food or food-related resources, the impact of conflict on agricultural productivity, and the direct impact of conflict on a vulnerable population's access to food. While the participants contended that the political, economic, social, and psychological dimensions of each of these issues need to be examined to understand food security situations resulting from conflict, they advocated for a holistic approach to this analysis. That is, the analysis of political dimensions, for example, should not be treated separately from the analysis of psychological ones. In every case, the particular context needs to be understood. These issues do not always manifest in the same way; therefore, on the ground knowledge is required both to understand the situation at hand and to identify ways to deal with it.

The second relationship, food insecurity giving rise to conflict, is less understood and may involve more indirect linkages between the variables. The participants identified several issues which might need be examined. Conflict might arise, for example, when a certain population harboring resentment over its access to food and related resources such as land or fishing rights; conflict is also possible in situations where food aid or other food-related assistance decisions exacerbate existing political-geographic-ethnic-religious tensions and

divisions in a given area. However, although food insecurity can be a root cause for many African conflicts, the relationship between these variables is complex. The hungriest populations, for example, might not have the motivation and capacity to mobilize and engage in armed conflict. Context-specific examinations are necessary to determine the nature of this relationship in any given case.

The third relationship, in which root causes give way to both food insecurity and conflict, is the least understood and the most challenging. Indeed, it can be difficult to determine whether food insecurity or conflict "comes first" in any given situation. There may be common factors influencing both food insecurity and conflict, but these factors may not be the root causes of those situations. Further research is required on not only how to deal with this analytic challenge more broadly, but also on how it complicates analysis of specific instances of African food insecurity and conflict.

The participants stressed that while food security issues, or more broadly livelihood security issues, are not new in Africa, the way they manifest on the continent today may be different than in the past due to the evolving nature of the African security environment. To this end, an analysis of other current and emerging security challenges, including natural disasters and climate change, disease, poor governance, urbanization, displacement, demographic shifts, radicalization and political violence, land issues, and human rights issues as well as others which were not discussed in this session (such as illicit trafficking), need to be examined with an eye toward implications for food security in particular contexts. While not every African case of food insecurity requires an analysis of all of these challenges, the participants advocated for a holistic approach to understanding each case of food insecurity, including how it is impacted by and impacts other security challenges.   This broad understanding may be required not only to understand the situation at hand, but also to address all dimensions of a particular security situation in Africa.

Within this context, the participants examined issues associated with determining the best ways for humanitarian aid and other actors, including military ones, to address humanitarian situations which have a food security dimension. They agreed that there are currently many types of actors who might engage on this front in Africa and each decision to engage, including the nature of that engagement, needs to be based on a good understanding of the context for that engagement. In some cases, military engagement may be needed due to the capabilities and capacities most military actors offer in the form of efficient logistics support in unstable, emergency situations such as those that emerge after a natural disaster. This kind of engagement is not contested, but other situations of militaries supporting humanitarian activities involving the provision of food aid might be more controversial, especially in conflict zones.

The questions of whom, how, and why a particular actor is engaging need to be asked in every engagement context. Politicized humanitarian situations are fraught with difficulties, and although they arise in situations which do not involve military actors, the possible negative secondary impacts of certain kinds of engagement by certain actors needs to be understood for every situation. In all cases, those charged with engagement need to understand how international humanitarian, human rights, and refugee law apply in that given context. Every action should be contextualized and guided by these human rights concepts.

A Note on the Organization of the Summaries

As stated previously, the academic experts offered presentations to ground the broader discussion at the meeting. As many of the issues raised in these presentations and discussions of them served as seamless catalysts for broader and interwoven discussion of the issues among all of the meeting participants, the authors of this report have chosen to incorporate these prepared insights into the broader summaries of the discussion rather than present summaries of individual presentations. The summary and synthesis of this discussion is organized along a thematic rather that chronological basis.

SECTION 4:
DISCUSSION SUMMARY- ANALYTIC ISSUES AND APPROACHES

Although the discussion was mostly centered on understanding the nature of food security and conflict challenges in African contexts, the participants also discussed analytic issues associated with examining these challenges more generally. The participants determined that research in this area, whether focused on Africa or some other region, while important, is fraught with some difficulties. They identified two analytic difficulties which can complicate examinations of particular situations of food insecurity and conflict, specifically, issues associated with food insecurity being both a cause and a consequence of conflict and issues associated with identifying appropriate frameworks to analyze particular cases. While no broadly applicable solutions were identified to deal with these issues, the participants stressed a need to recognize them when conducting any examination of a particular food insecurity and conflict situation and to understand their implications for analysis. This is especially important if the analytic product is intended to guide decision makers as they develop engagement plans relative to a specific situation.

Food Insecurity as a Cause and a Consequence of Conflict

The experts based their discussions on the assumption that there were linkages between food insecurity and conflict, though they acknowledged that both situations could arise without the other. That is, conflict is not a necessary condition for the emergence of food insecurity just as food insecurity is not a necessary condition for the emergence of conflict.[5] That said, they agreed that food insecurity could, in many situations, be both a cause and a consequence of conflict. Because of this cyclical relationship, challenging questions about how to break these cycles need to be asked and examined.

One participant identified three possible relationships which might need to be examined within this cycle: conflict giving rise to food insecurity, food insecurity giving rise to conflict, and root causes giving rise to both conflict and food insecurity. He[6] argued that the first relationship is the most understood and may have the most direct linkages between variables; the second relationship is less understood and may include more indirect linkages between variables. The third relationship is the least understood of all and the one that poses the most analytic questions; it can involve many indirect and direct variable linkages.

He identified one analytic dilemma associated with examining this third relationship as determining whether food insecurity and conflicts have similar root causes in a given situation and if so, identifying the implications of this commonality in developing engagement strategies for a particular situation. Beyond that, what are the more general implications? There may be common root causes for conflict and food insecurity – such as

---

[5] Related to this point, one expert observed that one way to analyze why some countries experience conflict when they have food security issues and why some do not is to look at the positive deviant cases. That is, those cases that should have experienced conflict by all standards but did not. The challenge, however, is finding appropriate test cases in the African region. The presence of a strong military may be a factor in determining whether a conflict will emerge, but this requires further study.

[6] To maintain the anonymity of the discussion, the personal pronoun "he" has been used to reference all participant statements.

hunger – though the relationship between these two variables is very much context dependent. For example, the most hungry, as discussed later in this report, may not be the most violent actors in every context.   Because the nature of these relationships is context specific, engagement strategies to address food insecurity and conflict may not be applicable in every situation.

Identifying a Framework for Analysis

The participants discussed the challenges of identifying a framework for analyzing and addressing cases of food insecurity and conflict and largely agreed that no single framework or approach is suitable to considering and addressing every dimension of every possible situation and every relationship at play. Because the relationship between food insecurity and conflict is both systemic and context-dependent, it is dangerous to assume every analytic and engagement approach will offer the right insights associated with each case and result in success. To that end, the discussants considered the nature of this framing challenge and offered some ways to deal with that challenge.

One participant noted that in cases where both food insecurity and conflict exist, it may be difficult to identify which situation "came first" – the food insecurity or the conflict – due to the systemic nature of the conflict and food insecurity relationship. Both situations may be created equally as the result of some root cause, though it is not always possible to identify the exact nature of the root cause. A lack of possible understanding of the root cause has broad implications for an analyst's ability to identify every dimension of the particular case of food insecurity and conflict that the analyst is examining. If the analysis is intended to support a decision maker's plan for engaging on that particular case, there are further implications to this analytic dilemma. If a root cause for both food insecurity and the conflict cannot be identified, the decision maker will not be able to plan to address the root cause in any engagement plan. Though a larger analytic question exists about whether decision makers should focus on root causes or their effects in formulating and implementing engagement strategies to ensure the long-term success of that engagement, this dilemma has broad implications for a decision maker's ability to focus on root causes if desired.

The expert remarked that although the specific root causes of food insecurity and conflict situations may be difficult to identify, it may be possible to identify common factors giving rise to and/or influencing food insecurity and conflict for any particular case. It is necessary to understand these common factors, though they may not be root causes, in order for analysts to fully assess the complex security situation and for decision makers to identify and implement ways to address it.   Taking the discussion one step further, he suggested that more broadly focusing on livelihood security rather than food security issues specifically might assist an analyst in better framing specific conflict situations and identifying specific influential factors impacting a particular case which need to be addressed in an engagement strategy. This idea of focusing on livelihood security rather than food security issues (which is but one component of livelihood security) received some traction among the expert participants at the meeting. This broader lens is essential to understand the scope of problems in the agricultural-base and related sectors, and it is also essential, as discussed later in this report, to identify the best ways to deal with food security problems and related issues.

Even though participants agreed that generalizing analytic and engagement approaches is not a productive path to take, one participant identified a rights-based approach as offering broadly applicable principles to identify and understand the human rights dimensions of cases that involve food insecurity and conflict and develop solutions to ensure those rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled in those cases. Security-focused analyses of food security and conflict cases would be strengthened if they included an analysis of these kinds of issues, which would in turn have a broad impact on subsequent engagement planning and implementation of those plans.   Overall, the expert emphasized that human rights violations are both a cause and effect of food insecurity and conflict situations and require attention.

SECTION 5:
DISCUSSION SUMMARY – DIMENSIONS OF THE FOOD SECURITY CHALLENGE

Types of Food Security Crises in Africa

The participants broadly agreed that there are two major types of food security crises in contemporary Africa. This distinction is largely based on the cause of the crisis, though it was also acknowledged that food crises can also be a consequence of other situations like (but not limited to) conflict. There are, as one speaker suggested, those crises which are naturally-occurring (i.e. caused by environmental, climatic, tectonic, and pandemic-related factors) and those which are man-made (i.e. caused by economic and political instability). Though there has been some debate on whether naturally-occurring food crises have become more common because of global climate change than ones mainly caused by man-made situations such as conflict, this notion has been debunked in recent years. Conflict still is the most prominent cause of food insecurity in Africa as well as perhaps in other regions of the world.

Within this discussion, this speaker, as well as others, emphasized that these causal distinctions are not always black and white. A natural disaster may emerge in an area which is already dealing with political and/or economic instability and this occurrence may worsen a pre-existing difficult security situation.

As this relationship is multi-factored and complex, this speaker offered a candidate crisis typology which might shed some insight on the types of food security crises impacting Africa today. He further suggested that this typology might be comprised of six elements (which may overlap) as outlined below:

> Slow onset crises (classic famines)
> Rapid onset natural disasters
> Economic crises
> Political crises
> Protracted conflict/complex emergencies
> Protracted crises with implications for the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT)

Slow onset crises (or classic famines) are generally caused by climate change, drought, chronic poverty, destitution, and government policies. They result in widespread malnutrition, an increase in mortality rates, and the destruction of stable livelihoods. As demonstrated in the Horn of Africa, classic famines are often exacerbated, and in some cases at least partially caused, by conflict and changes in the market. Other African examples of this kind of crisis include Niger in 2005, Malawi in 2002, and southern Africa in 2002-03. Though these crises still emerge slowly in comparison to others, the speaker noted a recent shift in the pattern of emergence. Specifically, although the causal factors associated with this kind of crisis have not changed, these types of crises have emerged more rapidly in recent years. The crisis in Ethiopia is an example of this phenomenon.

Rapid onset disasters also plague Africa. These situations are often localized to one particular area, are generally small, and occur on a periodic basis. For example, the cyclones that hit the east coast of Madagascar in 2008 and 2009 had a negative impact on the food crops in that area. Likewise, periodic droughts in its southern region also result in localized food insecurity challenges. Mozambique also deals with periodic flooding and droughts in its south and central regions which have a major impact on its food security at the local level.

Economic crises were a major cause for the food crises in Africa in the 1980s, and they continue to be a major causal factor in more current African food security crises, including those widespread crises in 2008. Today, however, globalization and increased food prices, a changing demand for food at the state level, and the unintended secondary consequences of local and state economic polices have been significant factors in shaping these food crises. Increased urbanization has also changed the way these crises evolve and impact the average African citizen. Because economic crises, as the expert suggested, tend to affect the most modern sectors of the economy, urban dwellers are most affected. When economic crises emerge, food prices increase and consumers are required to spend more of their income on food. Increasingly, in a democratizing world, consumers are apt to become more vocal about these food rights issues. These public protests can become violent. This potential for violence and instability may especially be a concern in urban areas where populations are denser and closely linked, allowing for easier mobilization. A challenge is to prevent such protests from becoming violent.

Political crises can also have a food security dimension, both in terms of being a cause and a consequence of food insecurity. Political crises in Africa can take different forms and are not limited to acute conflict (such as civil wars) and interstate wars (proxy wars).[7] Political crises that do not involve large scale military conflict are also possible. This expert surmised that a direct causal relationship between a current and ongoing political conflict and a food security crisis cannot always be discerned. The lingering impacts of conflict can also play a role in shaping food security situations long after the actual conflict has ceased. For example, in cases of acute conflict, people may remain displaced, whether in refugee or internally-displaced person status, for years after the conflict which caused their displacement has subsided. Displacement and issues of food access may go hand in hand; an example of this are those individuals affected by the Kenyan election crises of 1992, 1997, and 2008.   In cases of political crises without large scale military conflict, displacement is also a concern; present day Zimbabwe is an example of this phenomenon. Countries dealing with this kind of situation may also remain on war footing for years because the situation within the country is liable to quickly become politically unstable.[8] This uncertainty can complicate access to and availability of food; therefore, the food security dimension of this kind of conflict needs to be examined.

---

[7] The speaker suggested that interstate wars are fairly rare in the African context.   Most are fought by proxy within the borders of one country and do not involve military to military engagement. Some examples include Sudan/Chad, Ethiopia/Eritrea, and Libya/Chad.

[8] The speaker offered Zimbabwe and Eritrea as examples of African countries currently dealing with this situation.

The most common food insecurity crisis in Africa today is the issue of food insecurity brought about by protracted conflict/complex emergencies. In these situations, food security is often used as a weapon and both state and non-state actors engaged in the struggle for power strip assets, divert/manipulate humanitarian assistance, burn crops, disrupt livelihoods, and pollute wells to encourage capitulation from the opposing side.   In these situations, widespread malnutrition is common and the public health infrastructure, if not destroyed, may be insufficient to provide basic adequate medical services to the affected communities. Widespread civilian deaths, whether due to malnutrition, disease, or other factors indirectly related to the conflict, are common. This phenomenon can be observed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) where 95% of the deaths during the current conflict have been the result of health problems. Increased mortality rates, as an indirect consequence of the conflict, are the norm.

Finally, there exist other protracted crises with GWOT implications, such as the one currently plaguing Somalia, which need to be examined with a food security lens. These situations are different from other protracted conflicts in that the particular socio-political context is conducive to terrorist recruitment as a result of the level of grievances within the population. Humanitarian assistance officials may have difficulty gaining access to provide for the basic food needs of those affected by these kinds of crises. When humanitarian organizations gain access, it is highly possible that their convoys may be attacked by terrorist or other insurgent groups, resulting in a situation in which food supplies may not reach those who need them.

International Actors Using Food as a Foreign Policy Tool

Although contrary to international norms, international state actors may attempt to exercise political influence on a particular government or other powerful actor by manipulating the production and/or distribution of food in a targeted area. The phenomenon of food being used as a weapon or foreign policy tool is known as "food power,"[9] Several experts suggested that in these situations, an international actor may use food to influence the politics of "friendly" state governments and directly change the political behavior of other actors who are viewed as inhibitors to the food power exerciser achieving its political and strategic goals.   History suggests that food power attempts, however, are rarely successful in helping the exerciser achieve changes in another actor's political behavior in Africa or elsewhere.

Though there are examples of international actors using food to influence the politics of African states (as one expert noted, to "prop up" certain regimes), there are fewer examples of food power being used to directly change the political behavior of African leaders when they are not conforming to the food power exerciser's expectations. As one expert observed, one reason for this lack of attempts is that previous attempts have never been successful in achieving political change due to difficulties executing food power, African food supply and demand realities, and governance realities within African states.

---

[9] According to one expert, though food power is as old as medieval siege warfare, it is attempted more frequently when food prices are on the rise in the international market such as was the case in the 1970s and 2008.

First, it is difficult for international state actors to manipulate the cross-border movement of food because such activities require the support of others. It may be difficult for a government to convince its food producers that it is beneficial to withhold food from another country, and without the support of the food producers, this manipulation is less possible.[10] Additionally, most government food aid delivery is presently coordinated via neutral parties such as the World Food Program (WFP) and does not usually occur on a bilateral government to government basis.   Therefore, it is near impossible for a state leader to single-handedly manipulate food deliveries because such actions require some coordination with other actors who may not have the same political goals and objectives.

The second reason international attempts at food power are rarely successful relates to supply and demand realities. Simply put, food power is ineffective without scarcity.   Today, there are many governments that have the capacity to export and supply food to African countries, which import very little in comparison to the food available within the global market.[11]   Given this situation, if a particular African country has a food need that that cannot be met internally, it need not rely on one country to provide for that need (either through aid or other imports). For example, even though Zambia suffered from a severe drought in 2002 which impacted its food supply, the Zambian government rejected American, Argentinean, and Canadian offers to provide Zambia with maize because those countries' plants were grown from genetically modified seed. The Zambian government successfully obtained unmodified maize from Tanzania and South Africa to meet the country's needs.

Additionally, even if such alternative food sources are limited and the African government cannot find exporters to provide for the food needs of its entire citizenry, it is unlikely African leaders (the target of food power) will suffer to the point of starvation. This is because those with power (and armament) can always locate other sources to provide for their food needs. Although vulnerable populations within the country in question are likely to suffer from a lack of food, such a situation will not change the behavior of the leaders if their needs are met, particularly if the leaders are inclined to ignore domestic economic and social problems.[12]

The third reason why international food power is rarely successful in helping change the political behavior of a particular African state actor relates to governance realities. As one expert explained, even if an international actor is successful in manipulating the food supply of and delivery to an African country, the citizenry is more likely to blame the state denying the food for its insecurity rather than its own government, which may, in fact, gain support from its people for being targeted. Without the food power action delegitimizing the

---

[10] The expert provided an example of a situation where food producers refused to assist with this practice. Under the Carter Administration, the United States withheld grain from Russia as punishment for its invasion of Afghanistan. The farm lobbies resisted this policy and coalesced together during elections to ensure Carter would lose votes in the Midwest.

[11] For example, the expert cited Ethiopia as importing 2-3 million tons of cereal each year while there are between 200-300 million tons of cereal available each year in the global market.

[12] In 2007 in Zimbabwe, for example, President Mugabe banned some food imports such as sugar and beets in an effort to control inflation even though domestic food shortages were compromising the security of the population.

targeted government in the eye of its populace, there is little hope that government will change its political behavior.

Nonetheless, notwithstanding these difficulties, several experts stressed the importance of understanding that international food power activities do occur within the African context and have implications for how politics and food issues should be analyzed within the region. Today, particularly in the U.S. context (post-2001), essential medical and food supplies are exempted from economic sanctions and therefore U.S. sanctions on African states do not include a food restriction component (as previous sanctions on Libya and Sudan did). However, as one expert observed, food can still be used by any state as a tool to influence politics, and the possibility that any international actor will leverage it, regardless of the challenges, cannot be disregarded.   One also needs to discuss how African actors might use such tools for political and strategic purposes and how that impacts the African food security landscape (this situation is discussed in a subsequent section of this report).

Points of Intersection between Food Security and Conflict in Africa

As previously stated, the participants largely agreed that the relationship between food security and conflict is complex and cyclical; as a result, this discussion focused both on situations where conflict (or the legacy of a conflict) gives rise to food insecurity and on situations where food security issues may contribute to a conflict emerging in a given area. The participants observed that food insecurity does not always cause conflict just as conflict does not always result in food insecurity, although both kinds of relationships are possible. While conflict is also not a prerequisite for food insecurity situations, it is common to find situations where both elements are present.   Food insecurity situations may also exist long after a conflict has ended. Therefore, the relevant issues associated with the actual conflict and the legacy of that conflict may need to be considered in any analysis.

As previously observed, contextual factors are important to determine the exact nature of the relationship between a particular conflict and a co-existing food security situation. Though the experts cautioned against the equal analytic treatment of all cases, they identified several broad categorical dimensions that may need to be examined when assessing particular situations involving both conflict and food insecurity in Africa. These dimensions are political/economic, and social/psychological.   The participants cautioned against treating these as separate dimensions of analytical study; the discussion both emphasized and demonstrated the importance of conducting holistic and integrated studies of these factors in many contemporary African cases of food insecurity and conflict.

Situations Where Conflict Gives Rise to Food Insecurity in Africa

Throughout the discussion of situations where conflict gives rise to food insecurity, the participants highlighted three issues: African actors manipulating access to and use of food or food-related resources, the impact of conflict on African agricultural productivity, and the direct impact of African conflict on a vulnerable population's access to food.

Manipulation of Access/Use of Food and Related Resources

<u>African Actors Using Food Power as a Tool in Conflict</u>

As previously mentioned, there are few examples of international actors using food power to change political behavior in Africa because such attempts are rarely successful in achieving political and strategic goals. Within Africa, however, the story is quite different, though the success rate is still very low. While one expert could not identify any instances of food power being used between African states, he observed that there were many examples of African state or non-state actors using food power within the borders of a particular country during conflict. He offered some examples of African actors exercising food power including:

  ➢ Ethiopia (1984): The Ethiopian army cut off the food supply to the rebels in the break-away regions of Eritrea in an attempt to force them to capitulate.
  ➢ Mozambique (1980s and 1990s): The Mozambique National Resistance Movement (RENAMO) attacked food convoys in the country to further worsen the impact of the drought and enable them to take power.   This did not enable the RENAMO to assume power.
  ➢ Somalia (1992): Food convoys were blocked and 300,000 people starved to death. The United States intervened to curb the suffering and an additional 125,000 lives were saved because of the intervention. However, food power continues to be used in the country to little gain because the security situation is still chaotic.
  ➢ Rwanda/DRC (1994): Hutu militants in the DRC controlled food aid in the refugee camps in an attempt to convert it to resources which could be used to support their quest to reinvade Rwanda. This quest failed.
  ➢ Sudan (1990s and 2000s): The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and Khartoum forces attacked officials driving humanitarian assistance convoys delivering food aid to the region to subdue the South and destroy the rebels in Darfur. These efforts have not been successful in obtaining these objectives.
  ➢ Ethiopia (2008): The Ethiopian Army made several attempts to starve Muslim Somalis by blocking humanitarian aid intended for them.

The expert suggested that the most prevalent and widespread example of food power use in Africa's conflict zones is when state, rebel, or militant groups attack humanitarian assistance convoys containing food aid provisions as part of an internal power struggle. Though these attacks complicate already difficult humanitarian emergencies and exacerbate suffering within vulnerable populations who depend on food aid to survive, they are, as this expert noted, rarely successful in assisting the perpetrators achieve their strategic/political objectives. Even so, the temptation for these groups to try to take advantage of these situations is most difficult to resist. In the above cases as well as possibly others, these attacks did not directly result in subduing or destroying enemies. This begs the question of what level of priority should be placed on protecting food convoys/shipments if food power generally fails.

Non-Strategic Attacks on Convoys

Though some armed groups in Africa perpetrate attacks on humanitarian food convoys for strategic reasons, one expert cautioned against assuming that every attack on such convoys should be viewed as an exercise of food power. He emphasized that many of these attacks in Africa, especially in lawless areas, are often simple thefts. In some cases, the perpetrators may destroy the food on the convoys and steal the trucks, just as they steal cattle. These trucks may be sold for cash, but the intent is not to cut off the food supply to a given region. Thus, it is inappropriate to assume that every attack should be viewed as an attempt to perpetuate or create broader conflict.

Food as a Resource to Perpetuate Conflict

One expert reminded the group that diamonds and petroleum are not the only resources which can be directly or indirectly used to fuel and perpetuate conflict. Indeed, several of the participants discussed ways that those with power (and proper motivation) can directly or indirectly leverage fungible food resources to fuel and perpetuate a conflict and assist them in obtaining a particular outcome. This would involve the perpetrators making strategic considerations on how food should be controlled; they might consider diverting existing resources and investments to support the war effort or to gain control of valuable exploitable resources for economic gain.

The participants agreed that cash crops have often been used as a way to perpetuate conflict in Africa, though there was some discussion on whether cash crops could, in and of themselves, serve as sources of violence. One broader question to consider in this regard is: what is the significance of cash crops as an economic correlate of conflict? Though this question went unanswered (despite the fact that none of the participants disputed it was a good question), the experts considered some African examples of cash crops triggering violence and in some cases, perhaps conflict.

As part of this discussion, one expert cited the conflicts in Chad and Cote d'Ivoire in the late 1990s as good examples of cash crops both perpetuating conflicts and triggering additional violence. This expert noted that both conflicts were fueled and funded through political leaders' control of coffee and cotton crops. These crops not only provided the fighters funding for arms needed to perpetuate the conflict, but they were also an intrinsic source of further violence. Speaking more generally, the expert suggested that these actions can take two forms. The exploiters can monopolize existing cash crops, or they can seize land to develop them. As a result of these actions, labor and human/gender-based rights violations often occur, which adds a layer of complexity to the conflict and triggers further grievances.

Within this context, another expert further suggested that one also needs to examine how former combatants have gained control of the cocoa industry in West Africa and Liberia especially.   There is some indication this action is a means to perpetuate conflict in the area. If conditions align and allow for it, this activity has broad implications for a possible return to violence or at least an increased potential for violence.

Impact of Conflict on Agricultural Capacity and Productivity

The discussants considered how conflict may impact African agricultural capacity and productivity in affected areas. In particular, one expert shared findings from his household survey-based field research in Northern Uganda, Eastern DRC, and the Central African Republic to obtain a population-based perspective on the impact of conflict at the household level and ideas on measures that might be taken to remedy those situations. These surveys highlighted that, in general, respondents placed a high level of priority on food/water security and other related issues, such as health. Thus, food security issues had a major impact on daily life within these areas. The researcher briefly examined three ways that violence and strategies to deal with it might have an impact on agricultural productivity in particular in the regions of study.

First, perceptions of safety levels may impact worker decisions about whether to go to fields. In particular, the expert noted that his household-level survey in Northern Uganda, Eastern DRC, and the Central African Republic indicated that the level of personal security/safety in conflict zones plays a huge role in determining whether one will go and work in agricultural fields. Though the actual and the perceived level of safety/security may differ, the findings suggested that if an agricultural worker is surrounded by violence/physical harm or perceives a threat of violence/physical harm, he may decide it is not worth the risk to work in the fields.[13] Without these workers in place, agricultural productivity in conflict zones will suffer; this is a factor which has broad economic implications at a household and more macro level. Food may become less available in some areas.

Second, in situations where agricultural fields are destroyed due to violence, workers that depend on work in the fields (or related activities) may need to look for work elsewhere. This transition within the agricultural workforce has far-reaching implications on broader livelihood security within affected African regions. As the expert observed, in some contexts, those workers may also elect to join the war effort. The youth population, in particular, may be especially susceptible to joining the cause, in part for reasons of economic security. If there are limited agriculture-based opportunities for employment, disaffected youth may weigh the risks and benefits of joining the war effort. This will perpetuate violence, which in turn has broader political, economic, social, and psychological implications at both the individual and societal level.

The participant suggested that the agricultural productivity situation may not be remedied with the cessation or easing of conflict/violence. Emphasizing that a large percentage of the populations in post-conflict countries remain without assets and food, he remarked that this situation is confounded because the asset base in Africa in particular is already often (depending on the region) below the threshold in which a household can invest in its livelihood and food security. Without long-term investments and assistance programs related to restocking necessary livestock, agriculture, and natural resources bases, the

---

[13] As part of this discussion, this researcher mentioned that a relatively high number of survey respondents had witnessed violent events. In the Eastern DRC, 53% of the respondents reported witnessing someone being killed or murdered and 72% reported seeing someone being beaten by an armed group. In Northern Uganda, 35% reported witnessing someone being killed or murdered and 66% reported seeing someone being beaten by an armed group. In the Central African Republic, 35% reported witnessing someone being killed or murdered and 54% reported seeing someone being beaten by an armed group

probability for a minimal rebound after a conflict ends in a given area is low. In Africa, these kinds of assistance and rebuilding programs are few and far between. Another expert echoed the recommendation for what he called "conflict-sensitive development" to encourage agricultural productivity in African post-conflict zones and reminded the group that peace could, in many contexts, have a positive impact on agricultural productivity, though perhaps not a major one.

Third, the expert suggested that the role of economic cycles in perpetuating conflict must also be examined. In some cases, military strategies to deal with conflict may indirectly (and in some cases directly) impact near and long-term agricultural productivity when the strategies do not consider livelihood security issues. To demonstrate this point, the participant cited two examples in Uganda and the DRC. The Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda (FDLR) took over mines in the Kivu region of the DRC during the conflict in that area and then sold the resources to the DRC military, which, in turn, sold the resources to the Hutus in the Goma region, thereby facilitating the continuation of the conflict.   In Uganda, some segments of the population were put into camps as a means to implement a protection policy. The camp residents were only allowed to stray a few hundred meters from the camp, which further restricted their already limited opportunities to be economically productive. While this approach assisted with displaced person protection, it also demonstrates the secondary negative effects of some military strategies on livelihood security if that dimension is not considered when strategy is initially formed.

Impact of Conflict on a Population's Access to Food

While the situation of rebels, militants, and other actors attacking humanitarian convoys delivering food aid are common in some African conflict zones, there are several other ways which do not involve direct violent action that the presence of conflict can impact the affected population's access to food. As one participant observed, just as citizens' perceptions of security/safety within conflict zones impact decisions to work in agricultural fields, so too might these safety-related perceptions have an impact on the affected population's access to food. One expert noted that indeed, safety or perceptions of safety may play a huge role in determining if/how a citizen will acquire food within local markets in a given context. That is, even if agricultural fields remain productive and can provide local citizens with food, there is no guarantee those citizens will have secure and ready access to markets in which the food is available for purchase. Focusing on the results from the previously-discussed survey in the Eastern DRC to demonstrate this point, the expert noted that in North Kivu (which in the expert's opinion is the "most violent part of the DRC") only 38% of survey respondents felt safe traveling to the nearest market to obtain food. In Ituri, where violence has subsided in recent years, 73% felt safe going to the nearest market. This has broad social, psychological, and economic implications for both the general populace and those who depend on the markets as a source of income over the short and long-term.

The expert further suggested that safety issues are not the only ones which should be examined when determining African access to food markets in conflict zones. Even if locals perceive an area to be "safe," market workers, other goods providers (farmers, for example), and would-be customers may not be able to access markets if transportation and road infrastructure has been damaged as a result of the conflict and/or road blocks are still in

place. This has broad economic and social implications for local areas and for the broader agriculture sector if trading is involved.

However, as another expert emphasized, these infrastructure problems are not limited to African conflict zones – although conflict may exacerbate already extenuating situations of poor road/transportation infrastructure in the African region. Yet another expert echoed this point and further noted that poor road infrastructure can also facilitate armed actors in executing violent acts especially in outlying areas that government and other security officials may not be able to reach. If security officials don't have access to those areas, it will be more difficult to control them. In these situations, armed groups can perpetuate conflict or, in some cases, initiate it/rekindle it without much fear of consequence. Conflict conditions then give way to other food security issues.

Situations of Food Insecurity Giving Rise to Conflict in Africa

Two general lines of thought emerged from the discussion which emphasized, as one participant noted, that the causal relationship of food insecurity giving rise to conflict is both less understood and less direct than the causal relationship of conflict giving rise to food insecurity. First, under certain conditions, food insecurity can give rise to conflict in Africa. These conditions include a certain population harboring resentment over its access to and the availability of food and related resources (such as land or fishing rights) and situations where food aid or other food-related assistance decisions exacerbate existing political-geographic-ethnic-religious tensions and divisions in a given area. Second, although it is clear there are examples of food insecurity as a root cause for some African conflicts and there is potential for food insecurity to influence the manifestation of future conflicts in the region, it is important to recognize that there may be similar root causes which can give rise to both food insecurity and conflict. Thus, the relationship is complex and it is not always possible to determine causality.

Food and Related Decisions Instigating Grievances

The participants discussed how grievances associated with the availability of and access to food and related resources in certain populations may fuel the potential for conflict in certain circumstances in Africa. This discussion focused on two possible situations and illuminated some examples of how food insecurity issues have – in part – paved the way for African conflicts. In some situations, grievances can emerge when decisions affecting food resource availability and access result in one group benefiting over another and one group feeling resentment toward another. In other situations, the direct and deliberate targeting of certain groups with food assistance programming along existing population divisions may exacerbate existing tensions between groups and fuel resentment which can lead to conflict.

General Decisions Affecting a Population's Access to Food and Related Resources

The discussion suggested that specific contexts are important when determining the relationship between food and related resource grievances and violence/conflict. In some cases, a conflict might be examined with a food security lens and a food-related root cause variable may be important to determine why a conflict occurred. However, the link between food insecurity and subsequent violence may not be the only one to consider, or in some

cases, may not be any more important than other links. In other cases, a more direct link between a specific food security issue and violence may be uncovered. Overall, the discussion demonstrated that food security issues are not a homogenous category of root cause variables. They can take different forms depending on the context being examined.

In several cases, food insecurity issues were identified as one of several major causes of African conflicts. One participant offered several examples. He suggested that in Rwanda, for example, some of the root causes of the conflict in 1994 were land shortages and a drop in coffee prices on the international market. In the DRC, the location of the expert's recent field work, the top three reasons that survey respondents offered for the conflicts throughout the country were power struggles, the exploitation of natural resources, and access to and control of land. The land and natural resource categories must be examined with a food security lens. The participant further suggested that although there were many root causes of the recent conflict in the Central African Republic, one major cause was the government implementation of an economic policy which involved diverting investments in the agricultural sector to the mining sector. This transition had a significant impact on food availability and kindled grievances among those populations that relied on agricultural business for survival.

The expert also identified another situation where there was a clearer link between food security issues and violent activity in a particular region. The Sud-Ubangi district of the DRC's northwestern Equateur Province has been the scene of sporadic inter-communal violence over the past several decades. This violence has mainly been associated with tensions over limited resources. In October 2009, intense clashes broke out in Dongo as a result of disputes over fishing rights, which were being determined along ethnic and/or religious lines. In this region, fish are essential for the economic and human survival of local impoverished populations. These initial clashes expanded beyond Dongo to a larger area and gradually turned into widespread armed violence, which required the national army to intervene with support from the United Nations mission to re-establish government control over the region. Indeed, while this is just one example, it does suggest the potential for this occurrence.

Targeting-Based Decisions Regarding Beneficiaries of Food Aid/Assistance

When discussing this relationship, an expert introduced another way food power is used in Africa which is inextricably linked to human rights issues. The expert advocated for a broader examination of ways deliberate decisions about who will benefit from food aid delivery and food security programs can exacerbate existing tensions between groups and cause further resentment.   He emphasized that although the targeting that may result from these decisions is not always direct and/or deliberate, it may involve withholding food aid from certain groups or the manipulation of food flows.

Citing the 2002-2003 food crises in Zimbabwe and Malawi as a particular example of this targeting, he suggested these cases clearly demonstrate how selective delivery of food aid to certain groups along ethnic lines can create conflict potential. Indeed, this expert suggested that, not only were these crises linked to the legacy of food wars in the Southern African region and existing political-geographic-ethnic-religious (PGER) divisions, but the targeting-based response to the crisis (through the delivery of aid and other food security

programming) also raised human rights issues and introduced an opportunity for conflict. He emphasized that one needs to better understand these divisions to understand who controls the food in some African contexts. This kind of understanding may be required to provide early warning for conflict potential.

The expert cited another possibility in which issues of perceived discrimination might be relevant and might fuel tensions and result in conflict in Africa. Although he emphasized this potential requires further study, he envisioned a potential situation where a segment of a particular population might view programming aimed at improving food security in a given area as discriminatory and/or exclusionary. He suggested that this kind of situation might indirectly result in increased tensions between that group and the group most benefitting from the programming. He wondered whether government and non-government organizations (NGOs) doing this kind of programming consider these potentials and asked two related questions. First, if feelings of exclusion and discrimination already exist in areas where this programming is being conducted, can the organizations doing the programming overcome them? Second, are there actual cases of governments and NGOs excluding and discriminating against certain segments of populations in Africa with their food security programming? If so, does this establish conditions for conflict? What conditions need to be met for conflict to occur? The expert suggested further examination of these questions.

Though these questions were not examined in full, at later points in the discussion, two other experts identified situations where government and NGO-based food assistance targeting, whether intentional or not, occurs or might occur in Africa. They discussed the implications of this targeting for fueling resentment and/or conflict between groups. Overall, it was observed that although conflict is not a necessary outcome of these kinds of situations, the potential for conflict needs to be examined relative to the particular context being discussed.

Another expert broadly observed that the power to allocate food is a valuable state asset for many African regimes. For example, some regimes ensure that food is publically distributed to urban populations (vice rural ones) because individuals in urban areas are more likely to be able to mount an effective resistance toward the government if their food needs aren't met. Ration cards, an important element of food assistance in conflict areas, are also valuable instruments that are open to abuse. Police and other elements of the public sector may benefit from their access to these cards and take advantage of the access if there is a larger motivation to do so. In these abusive situations, the potential for food-related grievances within the non-beneficiary population might increase. This may, in some contexts, spark conflict.

Another expert explored the NGO element of these questions. He suggested that these situations of resentment over "who gets what food aid" might be most apt to occur in post-conflict zones where NGOs are providing general or livestock/food assistance-specific programming or in related long-term efforts aimed at restocking necessary resources depleted as a direct or indirect result of the conflict conditions. Though he emphasized these kinds programs were few and far between in Africa, when they are available, there may be some situations where a certain geographical area may be the target of more assistance-based programming than others. Broadening the discussion slightly, he recalled a situation in the Central African Republic, the location of his recent field work. Because of the higher

mortality rate in the northern part of the country, there are more NGOs in the North than in the South. However, the mortality rate is still well above the emergency level in the South. He suggested this situation had the potential to breed resentment among populations within those areas which are not the focus of the programming towards those receiving the most benefit. While these feelings of resentment may not be the sole reason for the initiation of conflict, they may be an important contributing factor.

Complexities Surrounding Attributing Food-Related Variables as "Causes" for Violence

Although the participants identified several ways that food insecurity can give rise to violence under certain conditions in Africa, they advocated against attributing food-related variables as the prime root cause of a conflict or violence that does not rise to the level of a conflict. They asked the question of whether a relationship exists between food security monitoring and conflict monitoring. As one expert observed, high levels of food insecurity may be a predictor of potential conflict areas, though this not true in all cases. The participants focused this discussion by examining the complex analytic link between hunger and conflict and the complex analytic link between food insecurity, violence, and the potential for food-related riots.

Are the Hungry the Most Violent?

It should not be assumed, for example, that the hungriest or those with the least access to food resources are always the most violent or will become the most violent.   One participant emphasized that although there may be common root causes between violence and hunger, demographic distinctions are important when determining the situations in which food rights issues will kindle violent action. Another participant echoed this point and cited a more specific example. He suggested that the typical African victim of hunger is a woman or a child in a remote area, perhaps 30 minutes away from the nearest road. Likely, this person is unarmed, illiterate, relatively uninformed about politics, and has no political affiliation. These kinds of people are not likely to comprise a violent demographic or have the capacity to cause an uprising over food rights. Therefore, an analyst needs to consider both motivation and capacity for mobilization.[14]

As one expert observed, perceptions of inequalities in food availability and access can give way to the formation of grievances. In some cases, these perceptions can be a precursor for violent activity if an opportunity exists for violence to manifest itself and the means are available to conduct violent acts.[15] In some cases, feelings of resentment among a given

---

[14] Within this context, another expert suggested that some questions about civil society mobilizations around food issues need to be examined and noted that, though civil mobilizations are part of a desired democratic process, it is a challenge for those mobilized in Africa to channel their energy to produce positive collaboration and change and not violence given current conditions in many regions. A question that needs to be further examined is how these mobilizations can meet their objectives without resorting to violence and the extent to which these should be viewed as a security concern.

[15] One expert provided an example of an African situation where both the opportunity for violence and the means to conduct it were present. In the DRC, there was some level of awakening after Mobutu's collapse of a perceived or existing inequality which provided an opportunity for violence. Foreign backers

population (whether rural or not) can provide opportunities for armed groups to move in and exploit those grievances to advance their cause. When there are grievances, armed groups have more traction with local populations and increase the potential for local populations to become mobilized with the armed group's support and assistance against the government or the source of the inequality.

<u>Are the Most Violent, Food Insecure Areas Most Susceptible to Food Riots?</u>

Another expert further expounded on how the relationship between the most food insecure regions and that region's potential for violent activity (and perhaps conflict) might be best viewed. He cautioned against assuming the most violent countries with the most food insecurity will have the most violent food riots. In 2007 and 2008, for example, the global food and energy crisis spiked political protests in 54 countries. 21 of these countries experienced violent protests. Violent food riots were reported in 12 African countries, but these countries were not the countries that were already experiencing the most violence or that were the most insecure – such as the DRC. In most of the cases where riots emerged, food insecurity was but one trigger issue which, when combined with others, set in motion political protests over other issues relating to governance, foreign investments in the region, etc.

Food Security and Points of Intersection with Other Current and/or Emerging African Security Challenges

At several points during the meeting, the discussion broadened to consider other ways food security issues impact and are impacted by broader African security situations beyond the presence or legacy of conflict. Although the experts conceded that many other security challenges in Africa may have a conflict dimension (that is, may be wholly or partly related to conflict or the legacy of conflict), conflict issues should not be the sole focus of analysis.

The participants employed a broad-based security lens to this discussion (i.e. they considered both human and traditional security concerns) and emphasized current security challenges, emerging ones, and their points of intersection with food security challenges and – more broadly – livelihood security challenges.[16] With this framework in mind, the participants discussed current challenges such as natural disasters and climate change, disease, poor governance, urbanization, and displacement. They also briefly considered emerging challenges such as the implications of the youth bulge and radicalization, violence over genetically-modified organisms, and issues associated with land investments, including land-grabbing.[17] The participants also examined the human rights challenges associated with food insecurity.

---

provided the discontent population with arms, which provided them a means with which to conduct violent acts. Both of these conditions allowed the conflict to develop and become instrumentalized.
[16] They focused on livelihood security issues more generally because one participant emphasized that livelihood security (of which food security is but one dimension) is a better frame of analysis to ensure a holistic understanding of these issues in a security-based context. This participant argued that food security cannot be treated separately (analytically) from these larger livelihood security issues.
[17] In addition to these challenges, one participant identified other areas which need to be examined, including population growth, income challenges, educational challenges, and housing challenges. The participants did not address these further.

The participants advocated for broadly discussing the way these challenges manifest themselves in Africa and their food security-related implications. Some participants suggested that these security challenges would need to be addressed in order for efforts to improve livelihood (and thus food) security in the Africa to have the potential to be successful. An integrated analytical and response approach, as one expert suggested, is therefore essential to addressing food security, livelihood security issues, and related security challenges in the region.

Current Challenges

Natural Disasters and Climate Change

Some food security-related problems in Africa are in part the result of natural disaster situations such as droughts, floods, and famine – long-standing security problems in the region. However, as one participant observed, there are few if any "pure" natural disasters in Africa. Several participants observed the likelihood that such disasters might occur in areas which are already dealing with a destabilizing security situation because they are so common in the region. The effects of a natural disaster, in these cases, may be compounded if the area impacted by the disaster is already unstable. An analyst will need to understand all of the dimensions of that existing instability, including, but not limited to, the food security dimension. Additionally, a natural disaster can also give way to new security situations that have a long-term potential impact on stability in the affected areas – not just in terms of food security, but also in terms of other security issues.   In this regard, many participants emphasized the need to consider the cause and effects of these disasters with a broad security lens. The particular context of the disaster is important.

The participants broadly agreed that the impact and effect of these disasters can grow exponentially when there are other security challenges plaguing the areas that suffer from them. In some contexts, poor governance and corruption problems also complicate these situations. Indeed, as one participant noted, these disasters can be manipulated to serve the political and economic goals of some governments. Conflict situations might also be relevant in some contexts to understand the cause and effect of these disasters.

The implications of global climate change, a much explored phenomena, also factored into understanding the socio- and cultural dimensions of food security challenges in Africa. As one participant observed, climate change may have broad implications for some African populations' ability to maintain traditional mechanisms to control food resources and feed themselves without external reliance; civil wars and other forms of conflict might further break down these mechanisms and exasperate the effects of climate change.[18] Echoing this point later in the discussion, another participant noted that most of the activities in which African households engage to make a living are directly impacted by climate change and weather. When focusing on the political dimensions of climate change-related food security challenges in Africa, another participant observed that climate change can also be used as a leverage point for some African governments' response (or lack thereof) to the food security

---

[18] Within this context, the expert suggested the impact of globalization on African population's reliance on traditional mechanisms to provide their own sustenance needs to be examined.

situations affecting their countries. In this regard, it can serve as a political and economic tool for the elite.   Thus, as this participant noted, both climate change issues and governance-related ones might need to be addressed in order to address some food security challenges in the region.

Disease

The participants briefly explored the points of intersection between disease outbreak challenges and food insecurity in Africa. There was broad agreement that food insecurity can have a major impact on the health and well-being of Africans. This can present as malnutrition, and it can also result in other illnesses. One participant noted that another possible relationship between these two challenges could be the fact that a widespread rate of diseases and other illnesses can also be a risk to livelihood security and more specifically, to food security. In this regard, combating this risk may be necessary to address food security issues.   For example, if workers in agricultural fields are not well enough to do their jobs, productivity will suffer and the provision of food to meet the needs of the local population may also suffer.

The participants also briefly touched on the particular implications of HIV/AIDS on food security. Several experts noted that this was an issue to discuss further, though a detailed discussion did not occur during this session. One expert noted the possible implications of widespread prevalence of HIV/AIDS for African access to and the availability of food. If many workers are too sick to work in agriculture and related sectors, productivity may suffer and the availability of food may also be impacted. Additionally, there are also broad implications for food access if individuals are too sick to go to markets to obtain food and related resources. Speaking more broadly, another expert remarked that HIV/AIDS is generally viewed as one of the major drivers for human crises (with food security crises being but one kind). This comment is supported by several academic-based studies with survey components.

Poor Governance

One participant broadly advocated for an examination of how poor governance and corruption, or as he put it, "bad policies," impact the food security situation in Africa. Beyond the climate change manipulation dimension of this relationship (which was previously discussed), he contended that these issues were in fact risks for livelihood (and thus food) security and would need to be addressed to combat some food security challenges in the region. Without addressing corruption, for example, the probability of successfully improving livelihood security in many regions of Africa is quite low. Building an African capacity to provide for its own livelihood security (which this expert identified as a requisite goal) would especially require attention to corruption-based issues. Addressing these issues would require greater transparency within African governments in dealing with food and related development projects and greater involvement of citizens in these efforts so that the (positive) impact can be observed at the lowest level. Some issues that should be addressed include government accountability associated with food aid and government use of violence to control that aid and other food resources.

The participant further challenged the experts to consider the long-term impact poor governance might have in sustaining long-term livelihood security in Africa. Focusing on the idea that today's African youth will be tomorrow's African leaders, he emphasized the danger of youth following in the footsteps of some of today's African leaders and the implications for long-term positive change and stability in the region. In some African countries, the youth do not have good role models in government and so the prospects for them to make positive changes to their country's security situation (rather than contributing to negative security situations) over the long-term is low. In some of these cases, the leadership of these countries is comprised of individuals that came to power in the aftermath of independence through the use of force and continue to use such force on their own people. Unless there is a transition in leadership through fair and democratic elections, youth in these areas will continue to believe that power is only gained through violence and that Africans targeting other Africans and conducting atrocities is acceptable, and in fact, normal. The youth may emulate this type of behavior if they ascend to a bureaucratic or political position.

This expert suggested that there would be a long-term livelihood security dimension to consider if today's African youth become tomorrow's corrupt leaders and do not make positive changes to their countries. If governments are corrupt and violence is pervasive, foreign companies may choose not to invest in those areas or divest their existing investments in cases where a security and/or economic situation worsens due to the high costs and risks involved with doing business in these areas. If those investments are in agriculturally-based sectors, this has profound food security implications. If violence were to increase, those food security situations would only be made worse.

Urbanization

The participants generally agreed that African populations are increasingly moving to cities in search of jobs and other opportunities.[19] This has broad causal and effects-related implications for Africa's agricultural sector productivity and thus, its food security situation. Several links between urbanization, employment, and agricultural productivity were explored in this discussion.

The participants observed that if agricultural opportunities dwindle due to low productivity (as a result of conflict or other social, economic, and political factors), those unemployed workers may choose to move to cities to find employment. As one expert observed, in some cases, these sources of employment don't exist. This may pose conflict-related risks as some Africans, depending on their circumstances, will need to find other employment sources to provide for their basic human needs and may turn to non-traditional and/or illicit sources of income.

There was some discussion, however, as to whether improving agricultural productivity would have an impact on urbanization rates.   Increasing agricultural productivity, as one expert observed, may not always increase rural incomes and lessen the potential that rural-based populations will move to urban areas. Improved agricultural productivity implies the

---

[19] As part of this discussion, one expert broadly asserted that several academic surveys suggest that demographic trends (of which urbanization is but one) may be viewed as one driver for human crisis.

use of mechanization and actually reduces the need for agricultural workers, leading to an overall reduction in the number of people employed in the agricultural sector.

For this reason, another expert advocated for analytically focusing on livelihood security issues (and ways to address them) and their links to food security ones, rather than narrowly focusing on food security concerns. He suggested that implementing and sustaining successful initiatives to promote livelihood security requires not only government capacity and will, but also good, contextualized, on-the-ground knowledge about how Africans maintain their livelihoods and develop ways to improve on them. If, for example, a certain segment of a population depends on seeds, there might be a low-cost government initiative to improve those seeds, but it should be done as part of broader partnering efforts to improve livelihood security more generally.

One expert suggested that another link between urbanization and agricultural productivity must also be explored. When populations become denser in African urban areas, farmers in rural areas (who do not choose to migrate) often cannot take advantage of larger urban markets because of the poor-to-nonexistent infrastructure linking them to the urban markets, which in turn impacts their agricultural productivity. As another expert observed, when agricultural productivity suffers it will have an impact on price cycles, which in turn impacts the trading environment. However, within this context, another expert cautioned against associating food price distortions with "causing" African food crises. He suggested that the context of each food crisis needs to be understood and that although heavily discussed, price distortions are not always the direct causal factor in every African case.

Displacement

In addition to urban migration, the participants identified displacement as another common African security challenge which has food security dimensions.   As previously discussed, displacement and food insecurity goes hand in hand regardless of the initial reason for the displacement. Human rights issues need to be understood within these contexts. Within this discussion, the experts discussed two unique situations: food security situations impacting displaced populations in conflict/post-conflict situations and food security situations impacting displaced populations in non-conflict situations. In either situation, displacement can involve mass movements of populations or segments of them within or across state borders. It should be noted that mass population movement across state borders has regional security implications.[20]

Conflict and Displacement

Several participants observed that both refugees and internally-displaced persons (IDPs) who are displaced due to conflict are likely to grapple with food insecurity issues during and (likely) after a conflict, although in different ways and at different levels of intensity depending on their particular situation. As one expert observed, examining the particular food security situation of displaced groups requires attention to the group's particular human

---

[20] One expert provided an example of the regional security implications of mass migration of displaced people across state borders. Many people migrated to the DRC as a result of the conflict in Rwanda in 1994. This migration sparked conflict in the border regions of the DRC.

rights situation. IDPs, for example, are not protected by a refugee rights framework, which has broad implications for these individuals' access/right to food aid while they are displaced. IDP situations in Africa are increasingly becoming more common than refugee ones. There is a growing debate on whether IDPs' rights should be covered and protected by existing refugee frameworks. Therefore, analysis of these issues requires attention to broader human rights concerns.

Understanding and addressing the relationship between food insecurity, displacement, and conflict also requires attention to governance issues. The discussion largely focused around challenges associated with African governments having the capacity and will to deal with the food insecurity that displaced people within their borders face both during and after conflict. One participant considered why the contemporary practices of distributing food aid in Africa could have implications for creating long-term dependencies on such aid within displaced populations and, more broadly, on those affected by conflict. The World Food Program, the major coordinator of food aid in Africa, may choose to keep food aid flowing to particular African countries after peace is achieved because some segments of the population remain displaced for lengths of time extending to 5-10 years post-conflict due to a lack of capacity and will on behalf of some governments to implement resettlement strategies, including those which address the common situation where displaced peoples' livelihoods have been destroyed. Without programs to help the displaced reestablish their livelihoods (whether agriculturally-based or not), the potential for these people to be able to provide for their basic needs is very low. The end to a conflict does not necessarily mean a quick transition to long-term or even short-term livelihood security for those affected by conflict.[21]

This expert further suggested that one of the reasons why many African governments receiving this aid lack the will to try to deal with their own food insecurity problems, including those faced by displaced people face in particular, is they know that because WFP is a neutral party, the provision of such aid won't be manipulated for political purposes (as it may have been in the past when it was common for African food aid transactions to happen on a direct and bilateral state to state basis). Therefore, some African governments may become too reliant on and comfortable with receiving this aid and lack the urgency to develop capacity to deal with their own food insecurity issues.

Other Reasons for Displacement

One expert emphasized that not every displaced population in Africa is displaced as a result of conflict and suggested that the particular food security situation of these populations also needs to be considered. Even during peacetime, these displaced people can face their own food security problems. Other potential reasons for displacement include environmental disaster, livelihood/economic issues, and climate change-based issues. Within this context, one needs to examine how to protect these individuals' food rights and more broadly, their human rights. Like IDPs, their rights are not protected under a refugee framework, though

---

[21] Within this context, several experts observed that the particular livelihood security situations that former combatants face, some of whom might also be displaced, also require attention in the aftermath of a conflict. Examining ways to address their livelihood security needs might take place within discussions of how to ensure their reintegration within society.

debate continues to surround the issue of whether this framework might be extended to pertain to these migrants. Thus, the human rights dimension of these situations also needs to be examined.

Potentially Emerging Challenges

Youth Bulge and Radicalization

One participant advocated for greater attention to the particular relationship between the youth bulge in Africa and precarious livelihood security situations. He suggested that close to 50% of the African population is now under the age of fifteen, making it the most youthful population in the world. He further noted that 60% of Africa's unemployed are youth. Given this demographic shift, the particular complex and multi-dimensional economic security situation of youth in Africa has profound implications for the region.

The expert opined that one of the reasons for this high level of youth unemployment is related to a lack of opportunities both in the agricultural sector as well as in other ones. Arable land in the region is becoming less and less available, a fact which has profound implications for the potential for youth entry into and sustainment of agriculturally-based livelihoods over the long-term. If employment opportunities in other sectors do not exist, the youth will need to turn to other sources of employment to provide for their needs over the long-term. If employment cannot be found in the non-agricultural economic sector, they will either have to deal with long-term, deep poverty for the rest of their lives (and potentially starve) or seek out opportunities in non-traditional economic sectors. If this becomes the case, the youth may become more vulnerable to radicalization, especially if they determine that their only option to provide for their basic needs is to join a terrorist group or another non-traditional (and perhaps illicit) group promising livelihood assistance.

The expert further stated that while terrorist recruitment of youth is not a problem in every part of Africa, it may be occurring in some areas and conditions may exist that will allow it to occur in others in the future. In West Africa, for example, there are continued efforts by al Qaeda-affiliated groups to recruit disillusioned young men looking to madrasas to fulfill their needs. If the opportunity for recruitment exists, those who feel they have nothing to lose may be susceptible targets. Emphasizing the gravity of this situation, the expert stated that if African governments in those areas do not have the capacity and/or will to deal with these situations, the potential exists for these radicalization situations to become worse and more pervasive. He advocated for involving youth in implementing employment and peace-building programs which not only create opportunities for them now but also help to build sustainable opportunities for the future. The focus, he suggested, should not only be on creating viable employment options for the youth but also more generally on conducting activities which curb recruitment. These activities might involve attitudinal-based efforts within vulnerable populations to demonstrate the downsides of engaging with extremist/non-traditional groups.

This expert emphasized that although the linkages between poverty, low agricultural productivity, and radicalization are indirect and may not be present in every African situation, the potential relationship between these factors needs be examined as it generally relates to the youth of Africa. However, the expert stressed that the particulars of each

situation needs to be examined prior to making assumptions about how these linkages manifest in certain situations. The underlying reasons for poverty and disillusionment need to be understood, and they may be different in every situation. Within this context, another expert expressed some concern over linking African poverty too closely to terrorism and framing discussions of youth poverty and unemployment with a terrorism-focused analytic lens rather than a development-focused one. If a correlation between poverty and terrorism in a given context cannot be demonstrated using real data, it becomes analytically dangerous to connect these two dimensions too closely, especially if the results of those analyses will be used in developing and implementing actionable policy decisions about initiatives in that area.

Violence over Genetically-Modified Organisms (GMOs)

While the experts agreed that there were not many, if any, major cases of violent outbreaks over genetically-modified organism (GMOs) issues in Africa, there was some agreement that under certain circumstances, when combined with other issues, these could be a trigger for riots and other forms of violent political protest. However, GMO issues should not be viewed as a (potential) primal cause for violence. Instead, they should be seen as an incendiary trigger issue requiring monitoring. Those opposing a particular GMO situation can conduct violent actions to make their point. This can involve burning fields, which has long-term economic/agricultural-security implications for the affected region.

As part of this discussion, the experts identified two ways GMO issues can be a trigger for violent outbreaks in Africa: population discontent over GMO presence and population discontent over a lack of GMO presence. As another expert observed, however, only the latter case has happened in Africa to date. In 2002, there was a violent outbreak in Zambia, which was experiencing a drought and therefore required food aid. A small portion of genetically-modified food had already been delivered to some rural areas before the Zambian government made a decision not to accept genetically-modified goods (as previously discussed in this report). When the government made the decision to remove the food and began to implement that decision, violence erupted and many locals looted the crops. Thus, the violence was not due to the food's presence, but the fact that valuable food resources were being taken away.

Therefore, although GMOs are not a major pervasive trigger issue for violent outbreak in Africa today, this does not suggest that it will never be the case. In this regard, as one expert identified, two questions need to be asked when examining future potentials:

- What kinds of food and development plans are needed in Africa to avert situations where protests and demonstrations over GMOs and related issues reach the level of a crisis/conflict?

- Which actors in Africa are using, or have the potential to use, GMOs as a trigger issue for violence? Under which circumstances might these situations emerge?

Land Investments

This discussion proceeded along three dimensions. The experts examined how the presence of conflict may impact decisions to invest in Africa and the possible security implications of land grabbing activities in the region. Though one expert noted that land conflicts are increasingly common in Africa and have broad local and regionally-based security implications, the participants generally advocated for a broader analytic lens to be employed when discussing land issues and implications for food security in Africa over the short and long-term.[22]

Impact of Conflict on Decisions to Invest in Land in Africa

Within this discussion, one expert observed how the presence and/or legacy of conflict can have broad implications for both foreign and African decisions to invest in land, a necessary requirement for a healthy, sustainable agriculture sector. For example, foreign donors tend to be hesitant to invest in areas where a conflict is occurring. If investments have already been made in the area, they may choose to withdraw those investments due to economic and security concerns. This decision can have far reaching and lingering economic implications. Once a conflict has occurred, the potential for it to reemerge exists and that might color future investment decisions. Investments by foreign actors and African governments are needed to ensure long-term agricultural productivity in the region.[23]

However, the effect that conflict has on land investment decisions is not limited to foreign ones. The expert also argued for considering the mental health impacts of conflict in this context. People who are most impacted by conflict (for example, those who lose their homes and whose livelihoods are destroyed) may question why they should expend the effort to invest in land either after the heavy violence subsides and/or the immediate threat of a return to conflict ends. Assuming they are able to reacquire arable land (which is not always the case) to invest in, they might weigh the risks and benefits of making that investment because they might perceive a high probability that their land will be re-confiscated or they will be killed. This expert argued that experiencing a conflict first hand, something many Africans undergo in their lifetimes, often changes one's perspectives on the value of investment and risk assessment practices. This might have an enduring impact on investment behaviors over the long-term – both at an individual and population level – which in turn has profound implications for future food security and more broadly, the relative health of land-based economies (including, but not limited to, the agricultural sector) in Africa.

_____

[22] Within the context of this discussion, this expert emphasized the complex intersection between land conflicts and other African security issues. He observed that land conflicts in Africa can result in an increased level of grievances within populations, which can in turn, depending on the circumstances, provide insurgents and terrorists with recruitment opportunities to further their causes.

[23] As part of this discussion, one expert argued that although subsidies play a role in food insecurity in Africa, the lack of investments in the region (both by African governments and foreign actors) is actually a greater barrier to long-term agricultural productivity. While subsidies are an issue to consider in the African food security context, they are not the biggest issue to remedy. If such subsidies were to be removed, the biggest beneficiaries of that action would likely be those countries that produce the most of the particular good (Canada and Australia for wheat, Argentina, Brazil, and the United States for maize, and China, Australia, and India for cotton). The poorest farmers in Africa would not benefit because their agricultural productivity is too low to compete with the other countries' providers.

Land Grabbing in Africa

The other element of this discussion focused on land grabbing. There was some discussion on whether this practice had security implications and more broadly, whether this practice should be viewed as a new form of international food power in Africa. As one expert noted, foreigners are renting and purchasing land in Africa at a more accelerated pace and in larger quantities than in the past (in fact, he suggested that foreigners bought or rented 300 million acres of land since 2004).   There are some analysts who view this practice as direct foreign attempts to control the African food supply, while others relate it more generally to a consequence of rising food prices and/or actors' desires to produce bio fuels.

One expert cautioned against labeling this practice "food power" for several reasons. Some foreign land purchasers/renters in Africa include companies in India, the United Kingdom, and Brazil among others. China, though its investments in Africa have been the source of much discussion in academia and government, is not a major player in this area.[24] He asserted that in most cases, the investors have the support of the state governments of the area in which they are investing. Given this government awareness and support of these activities, most are likely not deliberate attempts to control the food supply and thus not examples of food power. To further emphasize his point, the expert provided an example which seems to convey that African governments will be quick to stop these kinds of investments if they seem to cross the line into the food power realm. This case involved a South Korean firm attempting a deal in Madagascar which collapsed due to local resistance to its investment project.

Building on this point later in the discussion, another expert more generally advocated for considering this potential within a broader discussion of political protests over food issues. In examining every land grab situation one must ask who controls the land, water, labor market, and energy sector? In some cases, if a population resents attempts (or perceived attempts) to control food and related resources, those feelings may be triggering factor in shaping and fueling food insecurity-based political protests. Given this trigger potential, the human rights, conflict, and food security dimensions of land grabbing situations must be examined. For example, this practice might be viewed as a human rights abuse in some situations if the interests of the investor are placed over the rights of the population in the area and its actions have negative impacts on the population's right/access to food and other resources. If these rights/claims are not protected, respected, and fulfilled, a security situation can emerge which will need to be addressed. However, further research needs to be done on the significance of land grabs (and broader situations involving actors trying to control bio-fuels) as economic correlates to violence and conflict.

---

[24] This expert suggested that China has no geo-political interests in controlling Africa's food supply. He did not discuss whether the practice of Indian, English, and Brazilian companies investing in African land had any relationship to their country's geo-political interests.

Human Rights Challenges

As previously noted, one participant suggested that a rights-based approach must be employed when examining and addressing any situation involving food insecurity in either peacetime or conflict. The focus is especially needed because human rights violations affect food security and, in certain situations, food insecurity might indicate the existence of a human rights violation. Indeed, the expert suggested that human rights violations can be both a cause and effect of conflict. Issues such as hunger and the points of intersection with food rights and government accountability might be salient in some cases.

Although further examination is needed to understand what might constitute a rights-based approach and the value it might add in analyzing and addressing food security situations with a security-based lens, the expert suggested such an approach might be centered on three elements. The first element is to respect the rights of indigenous people to land, water, and control over resources. The second element is to protect against abuses of oil interests and land grabs, including bio-fuel interests. The third element is to fulfill the basic needs of those who cannot feed themselves through social welfare and social protection programs. He suggested that, in the absence of an applicable strong legal framework, attention to these elements can be valuable in helping analysts and responders understand the sources of food insecurity and its implications in any situation.

This expert also identified two other benefits of leveraging this kind of broad focus on human rights in understanding and addressing food security situations. First, it might assist in understanding the best ways of breaking the links between food insecurity and conflict within particular contexts.   Additionally, he argued that there is some potential for this approach (once further developed) not only to help engagers identify human rights concerns within their area of operations, but also more broadly to improve security situations, including promoting democracy and good governance practices (as well as improving accountability) in the area. The expert argued that addressing individual human rights issues (which are civil, political, economic, and social in nature) is foundational to addressing broader security issues.   The focus should not be limited to understanding whether basic needs are being addressed but should also include an understanding as to whether human rights are considered in actions more generally.[25]

---

[25] As an example, while a vulnerable population may have a right to land, they might not have a participatory role in actions to ensure their rights are secured.

SECTION 6:
DISCUSSION SUMMARY- ENGAGEMENT ISSUES

The participants discussed several issues related to decisions for foreign actors to engage in humanitarian situations involving food insecurity (and sometimes, conflict) in Africa. They broadly asserted that it was necessary to consider how to sustain engagement activities when making the decision to implement them irrespective of which actor is leading the implementation. Additionally, they observed that this engagement can involve a variety of actors – all of whom need to understand humanitarian and human rights laws and use those sources of guidance to frame and contextualize planned actions specific to a certain situation. They contended that while military actors, in particular, might engage in these kinds of actions, the specific roles and responsibilities of those actors, whether acting in partnership with humanitarian aid workers and other NGO workers or unilaterally, need to be examined. This is essential because in some cases, military participation in these activities, might do more harm than good and be contentious. However, humanitarian assistance can become politicized regardless of whether or not a military actor is involved in a given situation. The negative impacts of this politicization need to be understood when formulating and implementing any engagement decision.

Military Roles and Responsibilities

As one USAFRICOM expert suggested, USAFRICOM, as a military entity, does not have a leadership role in addressing food issues in the region, unless its assistance is requested by another U.S. Government agency such as the United States Agency for International Development or the U.S. Department of State, and then only if the issue had military/security dimension.[26] However, there is a need for the Command to be aware of these food security issues as they have an impact on the broader security environment. There are personnel within the Command, including interagency ones, who follow these issues.

Within this context, the participants discussed issues surrounding military engagement, roles, and responsibilities in the food security arena, including those which need to be considered when any military actor might engage in this area, whether presently or over the long-term. Two dimensions were explored: circumstances under which military actors have engaged in humanitarian assistance more generally and what kinds of activities they undertake and issues surrounding the value/drawbacks of military engagement in humanitarian assistance in certain situations There was broad consensus that military engagement in this area can be contentious and each potential situation of military involvement in food security and broader humanitarian activities should be examined on a case by case basis. However, the question of "which military" is acting/will act is also important when examining each particular case, including what that military's role is or will be.

One participant discussed three situations in which militaries might engage in humanitarian assistance, including food assistance. First, they might engage in this kind of assistance when they are an occupying force and need to provide support to civilian populations within the

---

[26] For instance, as this expert suggested, USAFRICOM would consider assisting with protecting food aid deliveries upon request if the host government was also interested in receiving this kind of assistance.

occupied area.[27] Second, military actors might ensure provision of humanitarian assistance within occupied areas during Chapter 6 and 7 peacekeeping missions when conditions are too dangerous for humanitarian workers to provide such assistance. In these cases, this assistance would fall under the purview of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Third, military actors might protect humanitarian and other workers' convoys providing assistance to vulnerable populations to ensure they reach those populations or provide other logistics support. The expert broadly asserted that the third situation is most common.

Most military actors' involvement in humanitarian assistance is limited to providing logistics support to other actors who are conducting humanitarian assistance activities, including the provision of food aid. The expert suggested that in most cases, such as those involving a natural disaster, a military decision to provide support in a humanitarian crisis is uncontroversial because the planned actions are not aimed at achieving non-humanitarian ends. He broadly asserted that history suggests that militaries may have a greater capacity and capability to quickly and efficiently provide logistics support to improve a precarious humanitarian situation than NGOs, especially in particularly unstable situations such as those that emerge in the aftermath of a natural disaster.[28] Other times, as another participant suggested, they might provide support in other areas – such as in the provision of communication infrastructure and assistance with training/exercises to prepare others to conduct activities in emergency situations.   In all of these possible cases, the reasons for engaging are purely humanitarian in nature. Militaries might engage because they have the capability and the capacity to do so and not for any political or strategic reasons.

The controversy and debate only arises, the expert suggested, when military actors directly engage in humanitarian assistance for non-humanitarian purposes.   This can occur when there is a conflict at play and a state might send its military to engage in humanitarian assistance to support political and/or strategic objectives or to assist in ensuring a particular outcome to a conflict. It can involve indirect humanitarian action (such as protecting humanitarian workers' convoys delivering assistance) or more direct activities. In these situations, the assistance becomes politicized and thus contentious. While some situations in which militaries protect humanitarian workers delivering assistance might be contentious, situations where militaries are conducting humanitarian activities that do not involve this protection, but do involve attempts to win "hearts and minds" are almost always contentious, particularly if the intervention is defined in terrorism threat-based terms.[29]

---

[27] This expert noted there were no current U.S. examples of this situation.

[28] Recent examples of this kind of logistics support, according to this expert, include the recent case of support in Haiti in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake, support to Pakistan during its earthquakes, and support in the aftermath of the floods in Mozambique.

[29] As part of this discussion, the expert identified a broader question to discuss. Does the military provision of assistance actually win the "hearts and minds" of the host country and does it result in an improved security situation?   Within this context, he noted that Andrew Wilder's (Tufts University) ongoing research indicates that, in certain situations, military humanitarian assistance activities may further destabilize security situations. There is some evidence of this in Afghanistan, though findings are not completely conclusive. The Commander's Response Fund in that country is providing funding for schools and clinics, but it is also increasing the amount of money flowing within the country and thus fueling corruption, which is destabilizing. The situation in the Horn of Africa is more complex and the relationship between provision of humanitarian-related assistance and security is much more inconclusive. This may be because many of the activities are focused on long-term development, such as the drilling of wells and involve less funding.

In this regard, the expert surmised that the question as to why a military actor is engaging in humanitarian assistance is relevant in all actual and potential situations of engagement and needs to be addressed in every case. The context of the engagement needs to be understood, as well as potential ways that others, including the recipients of the assistance, might perceive that engagement. If the military is engaging for political or strategic reasons, the potential value of that engagement in improving a particular humanitarian situation might be outweighed by the secondary negative impacts of that engagement. The expert suggested that the continued blurring of situations where militaries provide life-saving assistance during short term emergency situations and those that involve more long-term humanitarian assistance makes answering this question more complex and difficult. For example, one might need to consider: what is the most appropriate role for a military in a situation where a natural disaster occurs in a conflict zone?

Overall, the participants advocated for a careful context and evidence-based consideration of all possible impacts of a decision to intervene militarily in a humanitarian situation, especially those in which conflict is ongoing.   The overall goal, one participant contended, should be to understand where military contributions will make a positive contribution and do no harm and where they might not. As another expert observed, it is important to answer the question of "which military will be engaging and how?" within each context. Not every military actor has the same political and strategic objectives within each possible engagement context and not every action will meet the same results in every context (harm or no harm). Making generalizations about goals and objectives across every military actor in every context and the potential impact of those actors' actions is dangerous. The question of who is serving as a protector in each context is also important.

Politicization of Humanitarian Assistance

The participants broadened the discussion of military roles and responsibilities in providing humanitarian assistance to consider those questions that need to be asked and those issues needing to be addressed when any potential actor plans to provide assistance in politically-charged areas. Two such contexts were considered: conflict zones and areas which are also dealing with a terrorism threat. The participants contended that those actors who are acting on behalf of state governments, in particular, need to examine the potential negative impacts and secondary consequences of engaging in humanitarian situations in these areas before they make a decision to engage.

Humanitarian Assistance in Conflict Zones

The participants noted that military actors are not the only actors that are involved in state-directed humanitarian assistance activities. Even when military actors are involved in the provision of assistance, they may be acting on behalf of state governments that made the decision to engage in a given situation based on political and/or strategic interests and objectives. In some cases, especially those involving humanitarian engagement in conflict zones, there is some potential that the receiving state's population might be wary of why a certain state (through its military or other actors) is conducting humanitarian activities. That is, the population and/or its government (as well as other interested international actors) might perceive some humanitarian activities (the delivery of aid to certain populations, for

example) as being conducted for non-humanitarian purposes. In some cases, those actions (for example, denying food aid to a certain group or region) might not actually be contrary to International Humanitarian Law, though they could be interpreted as being contrary to the spirit of the law. These cases, as one expert suggested, are problematic. The expert contended that the politicization of humanitarian assistance is problematic because it always hurts the general public of the receiving state, not the actors those actions are designed to target (for example, state governments).[30] Therefore, each decision to engage in humanitarian actions must involve a careful consideration of how it will be perceived and the possible secondary (negative) impacts of that intervention. The drawbacks, in some cases, may outweigh the value.

In these politically-infused situations, some experts contended that it may be best to limit the provision of humanitarian assistance duties, roles, and responsibilities to humanitarian aid workers rather than actors acting on behalf of a state such as a state's military. A decision not to engage in conflict zones is one way to avoid potential situations of actual or perceived politicization of humanitarian assistance. One expert asserted that humanitarian aid workers, particularly those representing non-government organizations, don't usually face these kinds of dilemmas because they rarely have any political objectives on which to base their decisions and actions. As such, he noted that most humanitarian aid workers won't interfere in a conflict to pursue a particular outcome even in situations where belligerents interfere with the workers' provision of aid to civilians within the conflict zone. In this regard, the opportunities for politicization, and thus negative security impacts, are much less.

Integrating Terrorism Threat Reduction Programs and Humanitarian Assistance

One expert, broadening the discussion beyond conflict situations, further examined a situation of politicized humanitarian assistance. He contended that a complex decision arises when state actors rightly want to reduce terrorism threats and also want to improve security in regions where poverty (and thus hunger) is a pervasive threat to human security.   Both may be within a nation's interest, but a question emerges about the possible implications and secondary impacts of linking efforts to alleviate poverty with those aimed at addressing traditional security concerns such as terrorism and insurgency. This is not only an analytic conundrum, but it is also a policy and decision-making one.

The expert asserted that, although conducting poverty reduction activities within counter-terrorism (CT) frameworks brings greater visibility and funding to such activities, further attention needs to be placed on understanding the impact of such poverty-focused programming when it is conducted as part of larger CT initiatives. Furthering his point, he contended that resources to conduct poverty-reduction programs are generally limited. If

---

[30] Within this discussion, this expert cited a possible example of the politicization of humanitarian assistance. In September 2009, the United States halted food aid to areas of Somalia which are under the control of al Shabab, an Islamic organization with links to al Qaeda. This expert suggested this was done to exert pressure on al Shabab due to U.S. concerns about who was benefiting from the food aid. While this action is not exactly against International Humanitarian Law, this expert contended that it could be interpreted as withholding aid, which is contrary to the spirit of the law. He noted that although there are no observable secondary consequences of this action in Somalia to date, because there was a good harvest this year; however, this does not mean they won't manifest. Indeed, he suggested the crops are beginning to dry up so the impact of these actions may soon be apparent.

the U.S. Government, for example, decides to include a poverty reduction program in an Africa-focused CT initiative, it is possible that those countries with the greatest terrorism threat (whether perceived or actual) will receive the bulk of poverty-reduction programming, given the limitations in funding. These poverty-reduction programs are likely highly visible and well-funded. On the other hand, those African countries with the highest poverty rates may not have a terrorism problem. In this case, they would not benefit at all from this poverty reduction-focused programming and their security situation may worsen. He expressed concern that that this kind of integrated approach to addressing poverty and terrorism may not result in the greatest impact in reducing poverty (and thus improving human security) in Africa writ large.   Likewise, it is possible that reducing poverty may not help reduce terrorism threats. The correlations between these situations are not well understood and require further study – especially in policy/decision-making contexts.

Contextualizing Humanitarian Law in Developing Engagement Strategies

The discussion highlighted the complexities involved in examining the humanitarian law dimension of food security issues not only in Africa, but globally. The participants asserted a need for those who engage in providing humanitarian assistance (including food aid) to understand normative guidance (in the form of International Humanitarian Law, humanitarian principles, sphere humanitarian charters and minimum standards, and humanitarian codes of conduct) and the implications of those legal frameworks when making engagement decisions and planning actions. Several experts asserted that, although actors planning to engage in humanitarian activities should consult these sources of guidance and understand the implications of these frameworks for defining actions relative to a certain situation, the process of contextualizing particular planned actions within these frameworks can be challenging.

There are a few reasons for this. Some of these sources of legal guidance only apply to certain kinds of actors who might engage in humanitarian activities (for example, just states or just humanitarian actors). Today, there are many actors who engage in these kinds of activities, sometimes in partnership, which complicates examinations of how these sources of guidance pertain to certain current situations. This, coupled with the fact that many of these sources of guidance were developed in times during which conflict (and related food security situations) took a different form than today, presents a challenge to actors who need to both contextualize their actions within these frameworks and determine how these sources of guidance specifically apply to the actions they are undertaking or plan to undertake in a given situation.

For example, International Humanitarian Law is important to ensuring food security because it lays out the obligations of the state and occupying powers in a given area relative to food security. However, the usefulness of this law has become more limited in recent years because occupying powers, in particular, can take many forms and are not limited to states. The definition of what constitutes an occupying power is blurry and in some cases, opaque (as is the case in Somalia). The law was developed when this definition was much clearer and occupiers were generally state actors. As the nature of conflict has evolved, including the question of who participates in conflict and who might occupy a territory, this definition has become more muddled. A challenge then, is how to contextualize this law when examining current and potential future situations and apply it to those particular situations.

Regardless of these challenges, however, the law does provide unchanging guidance. The law clearly states tactical actions occupying powers and other states must not take in the food security realm in times of conflict/war, including starvation, direct disruption of livelihoods, and deliberate displacement.

Humanitarian principles, on the other hand, only govern the actions of humanitarian actors. According to one expert, though the principles suggest that all humanitarian actions should be neutral (i.e. not affect the outcome of a conflict) and impartial (i.e. only human need should govern decisions to provide assistance), these principles have been criticized from many actors involved in humanitarian activities, from military personnel to humanitarian aid workers. Issues critiqued include the principles' applicability to current particular situations.

Addressing the Human Rights Dimensions of Food Insecurity and Conflict

One expert stressed the importance for those charged with engaging on food security matters to understand the relationship between food insecurity and human rights violations. Human rights violations can be both a cause and effect of conflict situations, including situations where food is used as a direct or indirect weapon or political tool. To this end, he stressed the importance of identifying and addressing salient human rights issues as a means to break the link between food insecurity and conflict. Though engagement plans to address food insecurity and conflict need to be grounded in an understanding of human rights concepts, there are several questions about who should engage on these human rights issues and what this engagement might entail.

When engaging in a situation of food insecurity and conflict, one needs to identify where human rights violations are occurring or have the potential to occur and what actions need to be taken to resolve them. Several issues and concepts require attention:

➢ Determining whether there is adequate food and nutrition available to those affected by the conflict. This will require attention to the availability, access, utilization, safety, and sustainability of food and related resources within the area.

➢ Determining who has the claims, obligations and accountability to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights, including the right to food, within a given food insecurity and conflict situation. Answering this "who" question is important to focus human rights-related engagement strategies and consider the mechanisms which need to be used to ensure human rights are protected.

➢ Understanding how classifications of who is "human" and who is not are important within the conflict in determining who has rights and who is perceived as not having rights. Such an understanding is crucial to identifying where the fundamental human rights issues lie within a given food insecurity and conflict situation, which should, in turn, inform the development and execution of strategies to address the food insecurity and conflict.

➢ Understanding the impact of all actions to move food aid into a conflict zone within a human rights lens. Those moving the food may have an "obligation to protect" and a "right to assist" the vulnerable population that is receiving food aid. The provision of food aid is means to fulfill that vulnerable population's human rights. However,

particular decisions relating to moving the food might result in situations where the aid givers' and/or aid receivers; rights are compromised. These potentials (including tradeoffs) need to be examined when formulating and executing plans to deliver food aid in conflict zones.

➢ Understanding the applicability of Human Rights Law/Declarations, Refugee Law, and International Humanitarian Law within the conflict zone.

Although this expert emphasized that all engagers need to be aware of the aforementioned human rights issues and concepts when formulating and executing strategies to address food insecurity and conflict, it may not be appropriate and/or effective for every engager to address human rights dimension of the situation. Within this context, the participants discussed the need to consider the appropriate role of military actors engaging on the human rights dimensions of food insecurity and conflict situations. Although there was agreement on the importance of such a question, it was not deeply discussed other than to note this decision would likely be context-dependent.   However, many experts suggested the need to involve civilian actors in engagement on human rights issues.

Such engagement might involve, as one participant noted, a civil response corps (perhaps in lieu of military actors). However, because this concept is still in the development stage, it is too early to say how such an organization might engage on human rights issues and the potential effectiveness of that organization's actions. Though it may not be a useful tool within current conflict contexts, it might prove useful in future ones, if the concept demonstrates utility.

In all cases, however, the local community needs to be involved in efforts to address the human rights dimensions of food insecurity and conflict situations. In some cases, NGO actors, as one expert suggested, might be appropriate partners to serve as (self-appointed) interlocutors between governments and the local community in efforts to improve human rights situations. However, it should not be assumed that every NGO has the necessary legitimacy, access, and expertise to carry out this duty and serve as an effective engagement partner in addressing a problem. The "fit" of the NGO to the particular context needs to be examined. The local community may serve as a good source of input to external engagers on which NGOs might be most important to involve as partners in a particular context and whether additional partners, such as the United Nations, might be useful in addressing the human rights dimensions of food insecurity and conflict situations.