

## U.N. Conference on Trade & Development

### **Enhancing Food Security through Agricultural Development**

Thomas Lines  
www.tomlines.org.uk

Expert Meeting of LDCs  
Challenges and opportunities for LDCs: Graduation and Structural transformation  
UN-ECA Conference Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012

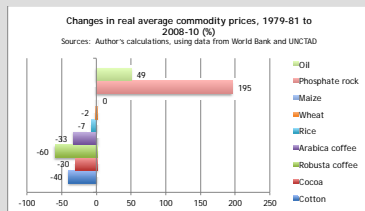
## A problem doubled

- ✦ The commodities problem used to affect LDCs on the export side
- ✦ Growth of food imports has put its on the import side too
  - ✦ Through the world prices of cereals
- ✦ The seriousness of this became apparent in 2007-08 crisis

## What explains the food price crisis since 2007?

- ✦ It appeared from *global* markets
- ✦ It affected wheat, maize and rice prices most of all
- ✦ It can affect countries even where the market appeared to be in balance
  - ✦ example: maize in Zambia

## Real price rises since late 1970s



## Food security policy

Food security policy falls into several areas:

1. Agriculture
  2. Agricultural trade (including imports, *where* the balance of payments is strong enough)
  3. Social protection and distribution of income
  4. Management of disasters and risks of disaster
  5. Mechanisms to address food shortages when they arise
- The first two are fundamental.

## Origins of recent food problems

- ✦ Imported price volatility
- ✦ Higher prices of imported inputs
- ✦ Climate and ecological crises
- This is a crisis of *industrial* agriculture using imported inputs
- ✦ Need for *resilience* in all three areas

## Resilience I

Restrict influence of world markets on basic food supplies

- ✦ Grow more food
- ✦ Expand domestic and regional trade
- ✦ Use other crops

## Resilience II

Do not concentrate on just one staple crop

Encourage traditional, 'non-traded' crops

- ✦ Prices are less influenced from abroad
- ✦ Evolved to suit *local* circumstances
- ✦ Nutritional benefits
- ✦ Use local agrarian knowledge

## Resilience in food supplies

For long-term gain, work on:

- ✦ Higher rural incomes
- ✦ Smallholder development
- ✦ Communications
- ✦ Research and extension
  - ✦ including farmer field schools
- ✦ Storage
- ✦ *Not* on artificial inputs

### **Resilience III**

Return to:

- ✦ Soil science
- ✦ Mixed cropping
- ✦ Natural fertilisers and pest controls
- ✦ Agroforestry

➤ Tropical agriculture for tropical conditions

### **The knowledge base required**

Use and redevelop existing knowledge  
as far as possible

Relevant research institutions exist

- ✦ Use them and develop them