

## **Politics, Policies, Governance and Accountability**

*Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June and Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June*

### **Why have current policies failed to solve the problem of food security?**

1. To what degree are the policies articulated by Southern African governments appropriate to the context in which they are supposed to be implemented? Do they really address the food security issue or are they more concerned with food production, particularly, national self-sufficiency in food?
2. How are stakeholders involved in the formulation of policies concerning food security? Do current policies recognise the needs of different stakeholders?
3. Is there real political commitment to the policies on food security? What resources have been allocated by the state to address the problem? What institutions have been created to deal with the problem? What real powers to such institutions possess?
4. Who are the winners and losers from current policies addressing food insecurity?
5. Why have current policies failed to solve the problem of food security?

*Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> June*

### **The patrimonial state:**

1. How do patron-client relations operate? How do the existence of these relations impact upon the implementation of food security policies? What is the historical basis for these relations?
2. What is the developmental opportunity cost of the patrimonial state, particularly in respect to food security?
3. What are the political benefits of the patrimonial state for the regime? What would be the political costs if these regimes attempted to by-pass patron-client relations?
4. Who are the current winners and losers from the patrimonial state in relation to food security?

*Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June*

**The political discourse around food security:**

1. What is the historical significance of food security in the study countries? Is the issue of food security embedded within an anti-colonial/anti-settler discourse? Is household food security linked to national self-sufficiency in food? Land redistribution? Is regime provision of subsidised food and agricultural inputs part of the discourse of national, state-led modernisation? Is food seen as a citizen entitlement to be provided by the regime or as an individual problem, to be solved through individual coping strategies?
2. Is food insecurity linked in public discourse to poverty? Is poverty reduction widely regarded to be one of the real aims of the government?
3. How does the regime represent the food security issue? What do they identify as being the main causes of food insecurity? Is there a tendency to blame outsiders? (Donors, neighbouring countries, etc.) or nationals (certain classes/social groups, etc.)
4. To what degree is the media free to discuss the issue of food security?
5. How have the media represented the food security issue to date? How does this differ from the regime?

*Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June*

**Interlocutors for the food insecure:**

1. Are there national/local civil society organisations dedicated to the issue of food security or concerned with food security?
2. To what extent does the relative weakness/strength of civil society affect the way in which food security is prioritised by the regime?
3. To what extent do coping strategies and other informal mechanisms displace more formal mechanisms of advocacy for food security?
4. To what extent do other problems (related to development) displace advocacy for food security?
5. To what extent is advocacy of food security prevented by authoritarian political practices (censorship, harassment of potential interlocutors, etc.)

*Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> to Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June*

**Governance issues and implementation related to food insecurity:**

1. To what degree is the failure to implement policies a result of poor capacity and lack of resources in government? Or, is the failure of implementation due to the nature of the patrimonial state/other poor governance factors?
2. Also, see above on policy/politics interface.
3. To what extent is the problem of food insecurity related to the general problems of poor governance in the study countries?
4. Are there mechanisms of accountability in relation to the formulation, implementation and monitoring of food security policies? What is the role of the parliament? Of local governance institutions? Of civil society? Of the media?
5. Does the judicial and policing system adequately protect property rights, thereby protecting the livelihoods of food producers? Does local customary law in relation to property rights exist? If so, how does this interface with formal state mechanisms of justice and security?
6. Is there a good public financial management system in place that enables resources to be provided on a timely basis and to an adequate degree to address food security problems? Is there a good revenue collection mechanism that ensures that the state has sufficient resources to allocate to policy implementation?
7. To what degree has decentralisation taken place? Do local governments possess sufficient revenue raising powers to address local problems related to food insecurity? Is local government responsive to the needs of local people? Are there mechanisms enabling local people to lobby local government regarding their problems?
8. To what degree does corruption exist within the state? What are the principle ways in which corruption operates? What efforts are governments making to address corruption?
9. To what degree does the state lack capacity (technical know-how, equipment, etc.) to formulate and implement sound policies, including in relation to food security?

Sub-theme: regressive taxation:

1. To what degree does the state lack capacity to collect revenue via a universal, progressive income tax?
2. To what degree does the state lack the political will to collect revenue via a universal, progressive income tax?
3. Does the state 'farm out' tax collection to local clients as a form of patronage?
4. Who escapes paying tax and are they politically/economically important to the regime?

***Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> June***

**Donors:**

1. What influence do donors have over government policy in general? What is the nature of the relationship between donors and those within government charged with the food security issue. Are the study countries aid dependent?
2. What are the policies put forward by donors regarding food insecurity? Is there a consensus amongst donors regarding which policies are best for dealing with the issue of food security?
3. Do donor policies and practices support the formulation and implementation of effective national food security policies? Are donors encouraging partial reforms through their own actions/inactions?

***Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June***

**Emerging Issues, Questions and Review**