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FOOD POLICY ANALYSIS FOR KENYA //

by

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## ABSTRACT

This study analyses Kenya's food policy during 1961-83 in the context of quantity and nutritional availability and shifts in exchange entitlements on people's access to food supplies. The effects of marketing and pricing policies on food system are analysed and the future food supplies and requirements are projected. Mainly secondary data is used but some primary data was collected in Karatina, Gakindu, Tala and Kikima areas. The techniques of analysis include food balance sheets, an exchange entitlements model, production and demand projection models, and least squares and end-point growth rates.

Most food available in the country came from domestic production. During the period, imports of maize, the leading staple, accounted for only 0.02-4.2 percent of the net available maize per annum. For all years, food supplies were sufficient to meet essential nutritional requirements of the Kenyan population. The minimum daily energy requirements per capita were exceeded by 13 to 50 percent and protein requirements were exceeded by 20 to 61 percent. The adequacy of food supplies in aggregate did not, however, assure nutritionally adequate diet for all households since that depended on how food supplies were distributed and upon each households' purchasing power. Thus, malnutrition and/or undernutrition in some groups of the population was compatible with adequacy in aggregate food and nutrient availability.

Restrictions on the movement of food have caused severe localised food shortages. The policy of panseasonal pricing and the restrictions on private trade in foodgrains have exacerbated the storage problem. By inhibiting commercial storage by producers, intermediaries, and consumers, these policies have greatly increased the demand for off-farm official storage and handling facilities. Restrictions on inter- and intradistrict movement of foodgrains should be eliminated; price controls should be abolished; and private traders should be allowed to compete with the National Cereals and Produce Board.

Food production can be increased through improved yields and expanded crop acreages. In the short-run, the most feasible option is to increase yields. However, increased food production alone will not eliminate food insecurity. The poor need more purchasing power to assure adequate access to available food. Indeed, economic development accompanied with employment creation and income distribution is the long term solution to food insecurity in the country.