



LIVING WAGE AND LIVING INCOME FOR SUSTAINABLE DIET

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable diets are far from assured for many people. Acquisition of a nutritious sustainable diet is predicated upon the availability of income, the inadequacy of which inhibits many people from realizing proper sustenance throughout the year. The occupational status of the majority of workers in rural areas and urban informal

economy of the Global South highlights a weak income generation potential, which impedes the procurement of a sustainable diet. Instituting a living wage and income and other proactive policy support measures would go a long way in overcoming the shortfall and allow many more people to lead a decent life.

KEYWORDS: Living wage; living income; rural work status; urban work status; income adequacy; food availability and accessibility.

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Nourishment is fundamental. The story of human history, reduced to essentials, revolves around the basic requirements for life.

- (Rotberg, 1983)

An adequate life requires the capability to get enough food, adequate health care, access to clean water and sanitation and to be a functioning member of society.

- (Crow, 1992)

BACKGROUND

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations defines sustainable diets as “those diets with low environmental impacts that contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations.” Following on from the definition of sustainable development, the concept of sustainable diet could also be characterized as a food regime that is easily reproducible by individuals and households over successive periods, without adversely impacting the environment.¹ There is, as well, a moral argument to consider and this ethical perspective argues strongly in favour of a “right to nutritious food” and elimination of hunger. Thus, it would seem that the ultimate goal of a ‘sustainable diet’ is to avert hunger and food insecurity, defined as the lack of access to enough nutrition, for an active and healthy life. For sustainability in the 21st century, this means more than merely attaining the basics of a sufficient number of calories that is the basis of World Bank inspired poverty lines.

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights recognizes this most

fundamental of need of a right to nutritious food, but the Article goes beyond its advocacy of this right by also explicitly including, health, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services, as fundamental basic needs. No wonder, then, that some have strongly argued that the concept of basic needs must be “understood as a system; that is, all human needs are interrelated and interact.”²

A sustainable diet therefore needs to meet two conditions. It must meet the needs of individuals to have a nutritious diet that is palatable and affordable. It must also meet the needs of society to be reasonably environmentally and earth friendly.

In this regard, a sustainable diet would mirror the model diets specified in Anker methodology living wage and living income studies carried out under the aegis of the Global Living Wage Coalition (GLWC) and the Anker Research Institute, across the globe.³ This model diet is based on the following principles: (i) it should be nutritious in more than just having a sufficient number of calories (which is the

¹ Sustainable diets are defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations as “those **diets** with low environmental impacts that contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations”

² See Manfred Max-Neef (1986), p.49.

³ There are 40 country studies in the developing world that have been conducted using the Anker methodology to estimate the Living Wages of workers in different locations and economic sectors, each of which is based in part on the cost of a low-cost nutritious diet that is acceptable for a decent existence.

only criterion for most national and World Bank international poverty lines) as well as having sufficient macro nutrients (i.e. proteins, fats, and carbohydrates), and micronutrients (proxied for by sufficient number of grams of fruits and vegetables), and limited quantities of sugar and oil; (ii) it should include foods from at least 13 food groups (cereals, prepared cereals, legumes, roots and tubers, dairy, eggs, meats/fish, fruits, vegetables, sugar, oil, non-alcoholic beverages; and spices, salt and condiments, and plantains in countries where these are widely consumed); (iii) it should not include soft drinks, snacks, cakes and confectionaries; (iv) it should be relatively low in cost for a nutritious diet and generally should not include many prepared foods besides prepared cereals such as pasta and bread and so more affordable and consistent with the cost-conscious shopping habits of typical workers; (v) it should accord with the country's level of development in order to capture the fact that people purchase more expensive foods as countries develop and income increases; (vi) it should be consistent with local food preferences to ensure that it is considered palatable; (vii) it should be consistent with local food availability to ensure that it includes only food items that are widely available; and (viii) it should allow for some additional variety and some normal food loss in storing, preparing and cooking food.⁴

Consequently, 'sustainable diet' has a qualitative aspect as well as a quantitative one. The qualitative concerns are mainly about food preferences that are intertwined with local culture. A sustainable diet, as explained in our living wages and living incomes studies, must adhere to the international norms, such as specified by WHO and FAO, regarding good nutrition. In other words, the model diet so defined should fulfil broad nutritional needs; it should provide a sufficient amount of energy

which is affected by the type of work and care activities. Furthermore, the food items chosen for the "basket" — broadly categorized under cereals, pulses, dairy products, meat, fish, edible oils, fruit, sugar and so forth — should correspond as closely as possible to the normal eating habits and preferences of people in specific environments.⁵

It is interesting that diets constructed to be nutritious in this way are not only relatively inexpensive and consistent with local food availability, preferences and eating habits but they also tend to be earth friendly in that they favour locally produced food and include only limited amounts of animal-based products and prepared foods. First, local food preferences and local cooking habits normally rely on locally grown ingredients. Second, imported foods, or foods brought in from far away tend to be more expensive than foods grown locally and therefore would not be included in a low-cost model diet if there is a local alternative. In addition, animal products are limited in Anker methodology model diets because they are expensive relative to their nutritional value. Although Anker model diets do contain animal products — milk for children and some dairy, egg, meat, poultry, or fish (depending on relative prices and food customs), their quantities are limited.

A key feature of any nutritious — and palatable — diet is that it needs to contain a variety of foods. For this reason, Anker living wage studies add 10-15% extra to the cost of the model diet to account for added variety. They also add additional amounts for spices, salt and condiments and for normal discard and wastage. This means that a certain amount of cash is needed for the family to be able to afford a variety of foods — since it is rare indeed even for farmers to produce all that is needed for a nutritious and varied diet.

⁴ See R. Anker and M. Anker (2017).

⁵ The point has been underscored in many studies dealing with food, hunger and nutrition issues. See, for example, Drèze and Sen (1993), Drèze and Sen (1990), Singer et al (1987).

DIETS MUST BE AFFORDABLE TO BE SUSTAINABLE AND FOOD IS NOT THE ONLY NEED

For diets to be sustainable, they must be affordable. It is well and good for nutritionists to specify the amounts and types of foods that people should eat to provide important public information, but this is meaningless if people cannot afford to purchase what is recommended or do not have access to a wide enough variety of food.

The fulfillment of the quantitative condition is that there must be enough food available to satisfy the needs of the populations at large. Indeed, it has been pointed out that there is no absolute scarcity of food in the world and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated at the World Food Summit in 1996 that in that year world food production was enough to provide every citizen of the world with 2,700 calories per day.⁶ But what creates anomalies in the consumption of food is how it gets distributed and shared. That is the basis of starvation.

Indeed, it would seem that the concerns related to the accessibility of food are embedded in the qualitative, quantitative and existential concerns; there is an interplay of what is a “proper” diet, what is available, and what can be accessed by the various social groups in society to reproduce their existence.⁷ These concerns also emphasize the mutually reinforcing relationship between hunger and poverty that sometimes occurs in a market economy,

because of the inability of some individuals and households to acquire enough food for subsistence, let alone consume a sustainable diet. Consequently, macro indicators of food production and availability are not sufficient in determining what different social and economic groups can actually procure, as Sen convincingly argues that individual hunger can increase at a given level of total food availability if market-based entitlements change because of relative price changes.⁸

There is now a general consensus among academics and health care professionals that the management of hunger, besides looking at the nutritional adequacy of food supply, must also necessarily look into the issues of acquiring it. Therefore, realizing a sustainable healthy diet for all must also, critically, take into account the economic status and income generation capacity of the various social groups in society. Of course, as Sen emphasized in his “entitlement”⁹ approach, there is no technical reason for markets to meet subsistence needs and no moral or legal reason why they should.¹⁰ Under these circumstances, some people go hungry because their economic position does not allow them to access adequate means of subsistence and a nutritional sustainable diet because they can’t get enough to eat, they are less productive and because they are less productive, they remain poor. The cycle reinforces itself.¹¹

⁶ See FAO (1996).

⁷ Drèze and Sen explain this by making a distinction between nutrition and nourishment, where the former relates to adequacy of ‘food intake’ and the latter to the ‘state of human being’. Drèze and Sen (1993): p.14.

⁸ Sen (1981). This argument permeates through much of the book.

⁹ Sen reduces food entitlements to four categories: “production-based entitlement” (growing food), “trade-based entitlement” (buying food), “own-labour entitlement” (working for food) and “inheritance and transfer entitlement” (being given food by others). See Sen (1981), p.2.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ The discussion of “poverty trap” linking hunger with ability to work is a recurring theme in poverty analyses. Among other, see P. Dasgupta and D. Ray (1990), pp. 191- 246. See also, A. Banerjee and E. Duflou (2012), p.22 and J. Ghosh and K. Bharadwaj (1992), p.146.

It is important to keep in mind — even in the context of sustainable diets — that access to food, though obviously fundamentally important, is not the sole concern for households as people also have other needs and desires such as need for healthy housing, adequate health care, children’s education, clothing, leisure, transportation, etc. These are all critical concerns in building up a ‘decent’ existence and they exercise variegated impacts on specific groups of working people and their households. This requires at least a living wage for wage workers and a living income for farmers and self-employed. The Global Living

Wage Coalition defines living wage and living income as:

“...the remuneration received for a standard workweek by a worker and the income necessary for the household, in a particular place sufficient to afford a decent standard of living. Elements of a decent standard of living include food, water, housing, education, health care, transportation, clothing, and other essential needs including provision for unexpected events.”¹²

NEED TO CONSIDER PROBLEMS FACED BY DIFFERENT GROUPS IN SOCIETY IN ATTAINING SUSTAINABLE DIET: A LABOUR STATUS APPROACH

As argued above, any examination of diverse societies around the world would inform of a fundamental inequality among those who inhabit these societies. Some are better able to satisfy the needs of life and live a “decent” life, while others falter in making ends meet. In market economies, to a great extent, discerning who succeeds and who fails, essentially boils down to opportunities available and the income generating capacity of differentiated social groups, where income is to be understood as a satisfier and an enabler of the fundamental ‘need of permanence’, or subsistence. Much of this income generation depends upon having, or not having, remunerative employment in the broader sense of the word. In the developed world, employment means having ‘paid work’ and the vast majority of those in ‘paid employment’ work for others for wages. Those who are self-employed take in a sense a salary from their businesses. In the developing world, however, the employee ‘work-for-wages’ relationship is not as common

or so straightforward. A striking feature in the countries of the Global South is the wide diversity of economic activity and the complex livelihood strategies that families often engage in to make ends meet. “These differences of livelihood”, as an eminent researcher in the field suggests, “are related to the nature and organization of production and exchange and are the basis of social class distinctions”¹³; they can be identified as differentiated social and economic groups.

The demarcation of social groups in developing countries needs to be understood if we are to understand how sustainable diets are attainable in the Global South — as an injudicious simple analysis would reduce the complex realities of existence and work to popular misconceptions. The determinants of different economic positions are conditioned by multifaceted social and economic relationships that characterise the work process in market economies. It is for this reason that when we talk of poverty

¹² The Living Income Community of Practice has a similar definition of a decent standard of living for smallholder farmers.

¹³ B. Crow (1992), p. 19

and inability to afford a sustainable diet, it is wrong to look at the poor as one ‘mass’ of helpless victims as implied by typical ‘poverty line’ statistics and poverty rates. Chambers and others encourage us to look beyond this ‘dehumanizing’ outlook and to connect the (differentiated) ‘who’ with the (differential) ‘why’ of their poverty.¹⁴

It is beyond the scope of the chapter to discuss the entire range of work that takes place, but important work and worker categories are worth highlighting. In a typical developing country, a typology of sorts would include the following different worker categories in rural and urban areas. The types of difficulties each of these groups encounters in being able to attain a healthy and sustainable nutritious diet are discussed below.

Rural Areas in the Global South

The work of the majority of rural dwellers in countries of the Global South is characterised by labouring for an income that often does not yield an income that could be deemed sufficient for meeting basic needs, including a sustainable nutritious diet. Furthermore, given that many of the remunerative activities in which rural workers engage are symbolised by seasonal variations in work, and hence fluctuations in income, this also suggests periodicity in the well-being of rural workers and their households, which undermines their ability to attain sustainable nutritious diets over the entire year in a very conventional sense.

Another factor that undermines income earning of rural workers is the environmental and geographical niche they occupy and its relative isolation. Living in areas that are essentially dependent on rainfall and without proper irrigation facilities impacts adversely on

what the land makes available. Living in rural areas that are poorly serviced infrastructurally, leads to higher costs related to transport for employment and for purchasing food and other necessary items of life. These concerns further weaken the ability of vulnerable rural groups to generate adequate income.

“Seasonality” very often characterises life in the rural areas of the Global South. Seasonality essentially highlights good and bad periods that rural folk have to cope with. In peak, or good, periods if the harvest is good, obtaining a nutritious diet may be relatively easy. But harvests are never the same and a poor harvest may lead to lower incomes and food shortages, which would suggest that poor households cannot feed themselves adequately from one harvest to another. In such cases, wage employment, particularly for the poor households, becomes important in supplementing income. But finding employment cannot be taken for granted, particularly in slack periods when it is most needed. Thus, if the poor rural dwellers cannot find a job to augment their incomes, then the acquiring of a nutritious diet cannot be ensured. In other words, fluctuations in income earning during the year suggest difficulties in procuring a ‘sustainable diet’.¹⁵

Land owner/farmers in the developed countries of the Global North are a much smaller share of the workforce compared with developing countries of the Global South. Moreover, the progressive consolidation of land holdings that has taken place in the Global North defines most farms as business enterprises. Many of these farms are served by full-time and temporary itinerant workers, especially at times of harvests, with most activity — other than ranching — mechanised employing labour-saving measures. The earnings of the owners

¹⁴ R. Chambers (1988), pp. 6-8. See also H. Bernstein (1992), p.22.

¹⁵ However, this does not mean that poorer rural dwellers are totally helpless. Research in different parts of the world has identified various coping strategies that are employed. Bina Agarwal divides these into five categories: (i) drawing upon assets; (ii) drawing upon household stores of food, livestock and other items; (iii) reaching out to social networks (patronage, kinship, friendship); (iv) relying on communal resources (common lands and forests); and (v) migrating and taking on employment for diversifying income. See B. Agarwal (1990).

together with an efficient food distribution system allows them sufficient income to be able to afford a balanced nutritious diet.

In the rural areas of developing countries, a minority of farmers are large land owners and commercial farmers. They may be few in numbers, but they command disproportionately large tracts of cultivable land. For the most part, their incomes and assets are sufficient to enable a secure and decent existence for them and their families. Their income earning pursuits are not discussed here, as attaining a sustainable nutritious diet and a decent standard of living is within their means.

Landless rural workers make their living by selling their labour for a wage for different end activities. Their remuneration can be in cash payments or in-kind. The majority of such workers work in agriculture and are especially needed in times of harvests and for seeding/weeding activities. Given that they cannot generate sufficient income from only their agricultural pursuits, many take on supplementary employments, such as selling their labour power to contractors for work outside agriculture. Their work normally takes place outside formal contractual relationships and they, therefore, are often locked into a set of coercive obligations. Many migrate to other rural areas and to the cities, wherever the probability of finding work and generating cash resources is better. Their incomes are quite unstable, dependent upon availability of work, and usually quite meagre. Many of them satisfy their subsistence needs through social networks — social relations of reciprocity — which provide them with some security amidst the flexibility and informality inherent in their existence.¹⁶ They encounter frequent episodes of non-fulfilment of subsistence and live a ‘hand-to-mouth’ existence and often take on debt and its obligation.

Sharecroppers/Tenant farmers do not own

land but rent it from large landowners mainly for farming pursuits and livestock rearing and the rental payment is usually in terms of sharing of produce; usually half, but it has been observed that arrangements normally favour the landlord. This group does marginally better than landless laborers but being tied to the land usually puts them at the mercy of the landlords who can exercise control over their labor power through the threat of withdrawal of lease(s). Quite like the landless workers, they also take on supplemental employments and debt given the exigent need for raising cash revenues for household emergencies. This means that sustainable diets throughout the year is difficult.

Subsistence farmers/peasants are workers or households that own land. A related aspect is peasant differentiation and a distinction can be made between ‘poor’ and ‘middle’ peasants¹⁷ based on the amount of land owned. The landholding of the poor peasant is not capable of generating a surplus and consequently an adequate income derived from the sale of produce. The middle-level farmers do produce a marketable surplus, but their economic well-being can be undermined, as also of the poorer farmers, by exigences, such as drought, floods and price fluctuations. Nevertheless, their economic position can be characterised as better than that of the landless workers, sharecroppers and tenant farmers and they are ‘relatively’ better able to satisfy their basic needs although this would vary over seasons and economic cycles, which would suggest significant fluctuations in procurement of the necessities of life. Most peasant farmers in developing countries may generally be characterised as economically insecure over the year and across years.

Urban Areas in the Global South

In general, in the urban areas of developed countries, working for a wage is the norm

¹⁶ A good discourse on these ‘reciprocities’ is provided by James Scott (1976). See, in particular, Chapter 1 on the ‘Subsistence Ethic’.

¹⁷ A classic work on differentiation is by T. Shanin (1973), p.68.

with wage and workplace protection provided under the law. In contrast in the developing world, there are numerous forms of self-employment as well as work paying wages under diverse conditions of employment where no regulatory frameworks apply. Thus, wage work, though similar in principle, describes numerous differences in practice. The position of a wage worker working under a standard employment relationship is drastically different from that of a wage worker employed in the informal economy. Let us look at some of these occupational profiles.

Standard wage employment. This type of wage and salaried worker is characteristic of a developed economy and this form of employment is growing in importance in developing countries with economic progress and industrialisation. Workers in this category in the Global South are typically employed in the public sector and in larger and formal sector private firms and in high-tech services. These would include, among other, high, middle and low-ranking government officers, clerks, accountants, bankers, brokers, university and school teachers, IT specialists, programmers, etc. Nevertheless, the situation varies between developing countries depending upon the development profiles of specific countries and the general situation is that — apart from China — this form of work employs less than 15% of the working age population in the developing world.

The worker employed under a standard wage contract enjoys the protection of the labour law but to varying extent, depending upon the country context. The wage range is quite extensive and conditional upon the skill levels of specific employees; the highly skilled being better remunerated than those with low skills. However, given certain protective measures that may apply under formalised arrangements — such as minimum wage and other benefits that are legally prescribed, particularly

social security, access to health, housing and transport — it could be proposed that those with regulated work contracts are often economically secure and are more than able to fulfil their food and nutritional needs — but not always especially in countries where the minimum wage is set at a low level.

Furthermore, it must be pointed out that in recent years, with the flexibilization of the production function, an increasing number of firms are taking advantage of ‘numerical flexibility’ to cut down on operating costs and wages by making more use of external labour, such as contract workers, outworkers, homeworkers, agency labour, temporary workers, and teleworkers. By doing so the employers absolve themselves from paying social security and other income benefits due under formal contractual arrangements and even minimum wage. Under the circumstances, such developments compromise the economic security of workers in formal enterprises as they undermine social protection.

Informal economy workers. The informal economy includes a spectrum of work ranging from proto-industrial production processes that can easily be accommodated through sub-contracting/outsourcing arrangements, to the more ubiquitous activities that, among other, include hawking, peddling and domestic work. The one significant feature of work in the informal economy is that employments are not covered by regulatory and social protection systems. Another common feature is its insecurity of work opportunity.

Informal work thus, by its very nature is fraught with the vulnerability of workers, exclusion from social protection, and meager earnings far removed from a living wage and living income.¹⁸

Informal workplace environments are also often unsafe and carry serious health risks.

¹⁸ For an interesting discussion on how working conditions and working time are manipulated by employers to the detriment of workers, see Standing (2004).

Job security is tenuous and for many wage earnings are governed by wage system flexibility, such as time-rate, piece rate, greater use of bonuses, etc. These workers sit on the cusp of the security threshold with their, and their families, economic well-being determined by demand for the products and services that they contribute towards. In other words, their incomes are generally governed by business cycles, where periods of boom suggest relative prosperity while economic downturns imply shortfalls in earnings. For these workers, moving in and out of jobs and shifting employments is a common place occurrence and the high degree of labour mobility suggests considerable variations of income over specific periods. Only a small minority of workers in this category eke out earnings close to the living wage over successive time periods.

One further point related to the unfavourable influence of fluctuating economic conditions

on informal economy workers is incumbent. Two concerns may be expressed by way of examples; the first is related to market determination, while the second is associated with the conduct of public policy. Firstly, given that most informal economy workers are remunerated in cash, they are manifestly more exposed to economic shocks, particularly inflationary conditions. When money wages do not increase at the same pace as prices, a rising trend in prices of essential commodities (especially food grains) impacts relatively more adversely and exposes the workers and their families to many hardships that exercise a damaging impact on the ability of the workers and their families to eke out a sustainable existence. Secondly, this also happens when the government imposes austerity measures that lead to constraints on the supply of food and other essential commodities that are particularly relevant to these workers.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DIET AND DECENT STANDARD OF LIVING OF FLUCTUATING AND LOW INCOME

The synoptical analysis of labour activities in the countries of the Global South presented above is essential to highlight the wide range of work in diverse workplaces that identifies a host of labour statuses and myriad means by which people manage their livelihoods. The discussion above, stressed the importance of understanding how people with different labor statuses come by incomes, the volatility and perhaps seasonality of earnings, and whether earnings are sustainable and adequate in enabling a 'sustainable diet' and a "decent" standard of living.

What is evident is that many workers experience 'entitlements' fluctuation depending on good and bad economic periods, which impacts their livelihoods and well-being. For the majority, livelihoods are precarious and not sustainable simply because their earnings do not constitute a living income that would allow them a "decent" existence. This includes not being able to afford a sustainable nutritious diet through the year or year in and year out. In challenging times, they have to make difficult decisions and choices that adversely influence not just their food intake, but their general standard of living. Apart from food security there is also the dire need of raising cash revenues for emergencies, such as securing health care, medicines and farm inputs, all necessary for sustaining a decent life.

When earnings are not sufficient, consumption patterns change and 'expenditure switching' between different categories of needs can result in extreme compromises that workers and their households have to make depending on how they define priorities. Consequently, income shortfalls, for example, may imply that groups with low income cannot afford to: (i) buy foods which are expensive per calorie such as fruits and vegetables, dairy, eggs, and meats/fish; (ii) acquire a wide enough variety of foods especially fruits and vegetables; (iii) obtain reasonable quality foods that are palatable and socially acceptable; (iv) purchase foods in larger economical quantities; (v) effectively store foods and avoid waste of foods going bad, molding, or being eaten by rodents or infected by insects; (vi) access proper education for children that enhances skills development; (vii) access proper health care and avoid negative impacts on economic capabilities; (ix) adequately meet emergencies and avoiding debt burden; (x) meet other necessary expenditure, such as for transport and clothing; and (xi) secure an acceptable quality of healthy housing. Thus, insecure and fluctuating income not only implies periods of deprivation and not being able to attain a sustainable diet with long lasting health effects, but also retards human capital development and restricts opportunities for workers and their families to break out of the poverty cycle.

TOWARDS AN ENABLING OF FREEDOM AND CAPABILITIES AND SUSTAINABLE NUTRITIOUS DIETS FOR ALL

All human beings have dignity, and so deserve respect and are entitled to what is necessary to live in dignity, including a right to life and a right to the goods necessary to satisfy one's basic needs. Thus, the objective of a just society should be to ensure that everyone has access to a sustainable diet, health services, a decent level of education and other basic needs of human existence. Despite this, present day trends are in the direction of rising economic insecurity in both developed and developing countries.

Enabling a 'sustainable diet' and a decent standard of living for workers and families are closely linked, especially in the Global South. As pointed out in this chapter, sustainable nutritious diets are only possible when people have sufficient income to provide for a minimum standard of living for all aspects of life and not only for food.¹⁹ This includes the need for a decent income throughout the year including in slack seasons. As discussed in this chapter,

the problems faced in achieving a sustainable diet are different for workers in the Global South than they are for workers in the Global North. Also as discussed in this chapter, problems in achieving a sustainable diet differ by type of worker in rural and urban areas in the Global South. Indeed, this chapter has argued that policies to achieving the goal of sustainable nutritious diets for all requires tailoring them to the circumstances and problems faced by these diverse sets of people. This means that a diverse set of policy options are required for improving people's ability to attain sustainable nutritious diets throughout the year. While living wage for wage workers and living income for self-employed and farmers is one option, there are other possible options such as universal basic income, food distribution schemes, and factors which improve "capabilities" in the sense argued by Drèze and Sen which is to avert poverty "a...reasoned goal would be to make it possible for all to have the capability to avoid undernourishment and escape deprivations."²⁰

¹⁹ Max-Neef (1986) argues that "one should speak not of poverty, but of poverties ... any fundamental need that is not satisfied reveals a poverty: poverty of subsistence is due to insufficient income, food, shelter, etc." p.50.

²⁰ See Drèze and Sen (1993), p.13. They go on to further illustrate the point stating that: "If a person does not have the capability of avoiding preventable mortality, unnecessary morbidity, or escapable undernourishment, then it would certainly be agreed that the person is deprived in a significant way" and add that "It is in fact possible to see 'poverty' itself as a failure of basic capabilities;" p.15.

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