

## ABSTRACTS FOR WORKSHOP NO. 7:

### THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND THE RIGHT TO WATER

*(in random order)*

#### **Human rights principles: Clarification and application to food and water**

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In international environmental law, environmental principles have long had a central position.<sup>1</sup> In international human rights law, on the other hand, there has long been much less emphasis on such principles. The paper identifies the human rights principles to be the following: Dignity; non-discrimination; rule of law; accountability; transparency; participation and empowerment.<sup>2</sup>

This list is based on the FAO's listing of human rights principles first introduced in 2007,<sup>3</sup> but is more explicitly seeking to justify why these seven principles are on the list.

Any promotion of human rights principles should emphasize that these represent nothing extra-legal, being merely 'philosophical constructs', but are derived from legally binding human rights. The most important role of human rights principles is the emphasis on obligation of conduct, guiding legislators, administrations and courts.

The paper will argue that there is a strong basis for understanding human rights principles in legal terms, and that more careful observation of and compliance with these principles can contribute to enhancing the quality of both public and corporate conduct.

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<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive analysis of environmental principles, see N. de Sadeleer 2002, *Environmental Principles: From Political Slogans to Legal Rules*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>2</sup> The following have also been mentioned: equality, inclusion, accessibility, good governance – and universality and inalienability; indivisibility; interdependence and inter-relatedness, but the paper gives the reasons for the choice.

<sup>3</sup> FAO 2007, *Focus on the rights to food: Right to food and indigenous peoples*, 2, [http://www.fao.org/righttofood/wfd/pdf2007/focus\\_indigenous\\_eng.pdf](http://www.fao.org/righttofood/wfd/pdf2007/focus_indigenous_eng.pdf).

# *Impacts of the fertilizer subsidy program in Malawi: Targeting, household perceptions and preferences<sup>4</sup>*

By

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## **Summary**

Malawi has over the last four years embarked on a comprehensive fertilizer and seed subsidy program to boost its agricultural production and to enhance food security in the country. The program aims to provide coupons for purchase of subsidized fertilizer and seeds to targeted poor rural households. It is of high interest to know more about the efficiency of the fertilizer-seed targeting program in reaching poor households, the productivity and food security impacts of the subsidized fertilizers and seeds. The targeting of fertilizer subsidies is affected by the fact that informal markets for fertilizer coupons as well as for subsidized fertilizers have emerged and which have productivity, poverty and equity effects that have not been studied in earlier impact assessments of the program. In this study we provide new evidence on the extent of leakages of coupons and seeds from the administrative targeting program and how these leakages re-enter the rural economies through the informal markets. The targeting efficiency of the administrative coupon system is assessed given the targeting criteria. The relationships between household characteristics and access to administratively targeted coupons, purchased coupons and purchased cheap fertilizers are analyzed. The impacts of the program are assessed with a number of indicators at household and village levels based on household perceptions. Household preferences for fertilizer, willingness and ability to pay are examined through a number of social experiments.

The analysis is based on a household survey covering 375 households in 6 districts in central and southern Malawi for the years 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 or only the last two years.

The main new evidence in this study is related to the extent of secondary markets for coupons and cheap fertilizers. Earlier surveys have largely neglected or grossly underestimated the extent of these. The findings indicate that the sales of coupons and cheap fertilizers did not come from households that first received free coupons and then sold them. They must come from leakages higher up in the system. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS) has not been able to control the distribution of coupons well. Leakages have therefore occurred at many levels and may have been exaggerated by the fact that 2008/09 was an election year.

Secondly, our study assessed the administrative targeting efficiency related to the MoAFS-criteria for targeting particularly poor, vulnerable (child-headed, female-headed, orphan headed, guardian) land-owning households, although it is not clear how to interpret these targeting criteria. A significant smaller share of female-headed households received a full

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<sup>4</sup> We acknowledge funding of this project through the NOMA MSc-program and valuable efforts of students and enumerators during the fieldwork and data cleaning. The project has also been supported and funded by the Embassy of Norway and NORAD. We acknowledge valuable comments from David Rohrbach, Arild Skåra, Marita Sørheim-Rensvik and Mette Wik on an earlier version of this report. All remaining errors are our own responsibility.

package of fertilizer (2 bags) than that of male-headed households. Those receiving coupons through administrative distribution were on average better off in terms of having a significantly higher livestock endowment. On the other hand they also had more children but having more children was not positively correlated with poverty. Other impact indicators provided evidence that the subsidy program may enhance child health and school attendance.

The secondary market for coupons for fertilizer also favored livestock-rich households and households with better quality houses. The secondary market for cheap fertilizers appeared to favor households with more assets and more children. Overall, it is therefore not very clear that the administrative targeting system is much more efficient in targeting poor and vulnerable households than a general subsidy of fertilizer would be. Furthermore, the administrative targeting system frustrated many respondents because of the corruption and conflicts associated with the administrative distribution.

Lack of transparency and lack of accountability in the administrative distribution appears to breed rent-seeking and conflicts. Large profit-opportunities appear to attract a lot of entrepreneurial skills that should have been mobilized for more productive activities. The unclear targeting criteria and exclusion of some households for unclear reasons appeared to frustrate a lot of people. One of the most common responses to the arrival of too few coupons to the community was to reduce the number of coupons per household from two to one coupon or even less, demonstrating the egalitarian mindset. A clearer targeting policy, like one coupon for basal fertilizer for every resident rural household, based on a publicly displayed list of resident households for open validation in every village, and based on the recent population census (if it can be trusted), appears as an attractive alternative targeting strategy.

Overall, the study indicates that either very strong efforts should be put into improving the administrative targeting by enforcing transparency and accountability at all levels, or the program may be changed to a general input subsidy program. The latter solution would be much easier to administer than the former but would involve other forms of possible leakages. A ceiling on the number of bags that can be bought at a subsidized price could be one relevant remedy in that case.

There are clear positive effects of the subsidy program on household maize production and self-sufficiency. Small farm sizes contribute to more than 60% of the households still being net buyers of maize but a large share of these net buyers produce a larger share of the maize they need to meet their staple food requirement.

Our panel data analysis did not find any direct effects of receiving subsidized fertilizer on asset or livestock accumulation of households in the period 2006-2009. This could also be due to the indirect access to cheap coupons and fertilizers. However, there was a significant general asset accumulation in this period which possibly has been strengthened through the economy-wide effects of the subsidy program.

**Title: Land Mines, Cluster Bombs, Environmental Problems and Food Insecurity in Africa.**

Oyeniya, Bukola Adeyemi

**Abstract:**

This paper examines the nexus between the use of land mines, cluster bombs, etc (used in African civil wars and conflicts) and crop-losses (caused by natural disaster) in the burgeoning landscape of food and nutrition insecurity in contemporary Africa. As recent occurrences in DR Congo and Rwanda suggest, while conflicts and wars have left devastating and deep-seating long and short-term problems at their wakes in 'countries-in-conflicts'; land mines, cluster bombs, etc are stimulating missed-harvest and crop-losses in 'countries-out-of-conflicts' while ecological problems such as erosion, pest-invasion, and drought underwrite food and nutrition insecurity in 'countries-with-relative-peace', as the examples of Niger Republic and Uganda suggest.

As extant literature show, conflicts and wars, among other things, have weaned displacements of peoples, dislocation and disruption of societies with the immediate/attendant need to cater for the displaced and traumatized people; ecological problems have, in turn, led to crop-losses, crop-failures, and missed-harvest with the attendant problem of hunger and starvation. Compounding these problems and frustrating post-conflict reconstruction and rebuilding are the need to debrief and re-integrate combatants as well as the need to de-mine lands.

Using oral interviews, documentary, and archival records, especially among victims in war-torn DR Congo and Rwanda as well as in pestilence ravaged Niger Republic and Uganda; this paper finds similar results in the two sets of case studies: a silent war of food and nutrition insecurity, which present more devastating consequences - food insecurity leads to hunger and death while nutrition insecurity leads to stunting (low-weight for age) associated with lower human capital development further causing a slow down in the pace of national economic development. The paper, therefore, advocates for (i) review of processes of mine clearance and land use patterns in affected zones, (ii) better coordinated inter-state efforts at halting the production and procurements of cluster-bombs, land mines, and (ii) increasing attention to environmental use.

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