

Share The World's Resources

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Global food reserves
Framing the context for
a new multilateralism

The importance of context: four ways to discuss food reserves:

1. Supply management measures to address low stock holdings and to stabilise prices for both consumers and producers
2. For humanitarian reasons, separated from the market
3. For export promotion through regional trade blocs
4. Innovative mechanisms to mitigate speculation

A two-pronged strategy: supply management and humanitarian response

- “ Supply management: more important now than ever before
- “ Humanitarian response systems: managed and operated by the World Food Program
- “ The two issues are not to be confused!

Political constraints

- “ The political climate appears positive for implementing humanitarian food reserves, but...
- “ The US and EU have long been against any changes that could undermine their commodity export markets
- “ Previous attempts to implement reserves for multilateral supply management have failed

Institutional constraints

- “ Scattered response and a patchwork quilt of mandates
- “ None of the existing multilateral institutions have the appropriate framework to address global food reserves
- “ Some of the most important actors in the food system are almost wholly excluded from multilateral forums on food and agriculture

Legal and economic constraints

- “ The legal position of reserves could be contentious under current trade rules
- “ A major criticism of stock programs is the issue of cost

The need for a new compact for food and agriculture: a Global Food Security Convention?

- “ Despite the formidable constraints, a new vision is required for food and agriculture policymaking
- “ A compact could address the implementation of reserves and overcome institutional and legal constraints

The three pillars of a Global Food Security Convention

- “ **Legal:** Human Rights at the centre of policymaking
- “ **Political:** Inclusive and democratic
- “ **Technical:** Address the implementation of food reserves for supply management and humanitarian purposes

Global food reserves: one piece of the jigsaw

- “ Food reserves are not a panacea to end hunger or raise prices at the farm gate
- “ We need *genuine* multilateral cooperation, not the end goal of stabilising markets to maintain the current trade system
- “ There exists a notable precedent: Hot Springs, 1943

The primary responsibility lies with each nation for seeing that its own people have the food needed for life and health; steps to this end are for national determination. But each nation can fully achieve its goal only if all work together. +

(Article V, Final Act of the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture, June 1943)

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October 2009

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STWR advocates for governments to secure basic human needs by sharing essential resources such as water, energy and staple food.

As an NGO with Consultative Status at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, we work to influence policy in areas such as international trade, finance and agriculture.

Share The World's Resources

Our publications provide analysis on key global justice issues, and explain how and why economic sharing can end poverty and promote international peace and security.

The website presents a selection of the latest international news, articles and videos on a wide range of critical issues including globalisation, climate change, corporate power, alternative economics and people's movements.

You can find us on Facebook and Twitter, or sign up to our newsletters.

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