

# A PEACEFUL, POVERTY AND HUNGER-FREE COLOMBIA

" Peace will never be reached in a world that is divided into abundance and misery, luxury and poverty, squandering and hunger "

Josué de Castro

The problems of *food security and nutrition* (FSN) cannot be solved only by impacting the malnutrition situations that arise from limited food consumption and the deterioration of health and wellbeing conditions in the population. The structural conditions that have been damaged, social and economic inequality, environmental deterioration, among others, must all be considered; for these do enable guaranteeing the basic conditions to benefit from the biological use of food from the determining factors of human wellbeing: biological, social, psychological and cultural [Del Castillo M. 2010].

FSN analysis must stem from two key elements: first, it must be understood that this is an evolving concept, and second, that there is great frustration due to the poor results that these policies have produced throughout the world. To contribute to the first point, CiSoe [2016] and OBSSAN-UN [2016] propose the need to include macroeconomic policies among the determining factors of FSN, because these have an impact on the food security of

a country and on the nutritional level of its inhabitants. Food insecurity is associated with a lower economic growth and a higher incidence of poverty (Table 1). Moreover, the main economic variables, such as per capita and national GDP, are associated with a significant number of indicators of the different forms of food insecurity.

**TABLE 1. ASSOCIATION BETWEEN MACROECONOMIC VARIABLES AND FSN**

Macroeconomic variable	Correlation with FSN variables
Per capita GDP	Overweight and obesity in children aged 5 to 17 (+) Household with food and nutritional insecurity (-) Boys and girls aged 5 to 12 who spend 2 or more hours watching television or playing videogames (+) Teenagers aged 13-17 who spend 2 or more hours watching television or playing videogames (+)
Total GDP (2005 constant prices)	Delayed height growth in children aged 5 to 17 (-) Overweight and obesity in children aged 5 to 17 (+) Households with food and nutritional insecurity (-)
Manufacturing industry	Delayed height growth in children aged 5 to 17 (-)

Source: Prepared by: CiSoe – OBSSAN with [MINSALUD et. al 2011] and [DANE 2016a] data

## FSN MACROECONOMIC CONTEXT IN COLOMBIA

The starting point for any national FSN strategy undeniably must comprehend the current economic behavior of the country and the social standing of its population. In the case of Colombia, the new peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, FARC) group, and negotiations with the National Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, ELN) must also be recognized as strides that will significantly change the future of this nation. All of these conditions must be a part of the initial reference framework for any FSN policy for national, departmental and local governments; as well as for international cooperation bodies.

Peacebuilding will be a great opportunity to begin making reforms that have been postponed over time. Among these are a true rural reform, changes in the education system and a pension reform that would prevent any more elderly persons to be left homeless. With the foregoing, Colombia could solve the most dire of its social problems: its deep inequality and its high violence rates [López M. 2016].

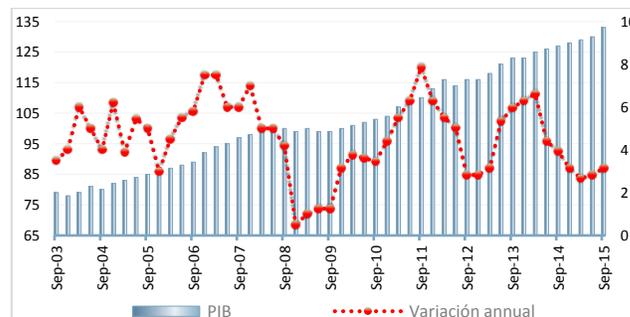
The economic situation, the relative scarcity of national resources and the demand for funds will require the country to align international cooperation during the post-conflict period so that it will respond to the guidelines of national public policies. The strategic proposal – for the present and future - put forward by the World Food Program (WFP) addresses this new national reality. This

context opens new opportunities for the entity, which should lead to a new path in in their relationship with the Government of Colombia.

## ECONOMIC SITUATION IN COLOMBIA

The Colombian economy is not going through its best moment. After a decade with an average annual growth of 4.4%, this growth dropped to 1.7% in 2016 and is expected to be at 2.5% this year. This means that there will be lower incomes at household level and lower spending on food (Figure 2).

**FIGURE 1. 2003-2015 ECONOMIC GROWTH**

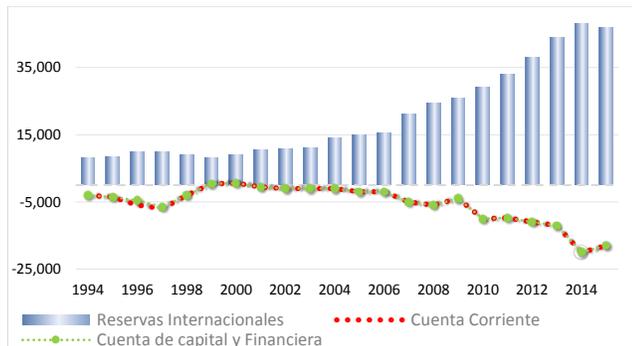


Source: [Banco de la República], 2015, 33]

The repercussions of this economic downturn are clearly illustrated (Figure 3): impact on national food production from competition with cheap imports, high commercial deficit, among others, because notwithstanding a more favorable exchange rate, exports are just starting to show

a slight recovery in *minor exports*. Nevertheless, the moderate increase in the international price of oil allows us to anticipate a better performance in 2017.

**FIGURE 2. 1994-2014 ANUAL PAYMENT BALANCE EVOLUTION**



Source: [Banco de la República, 2015, 19]

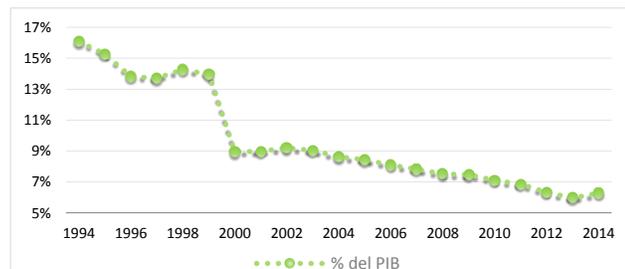
Therefore, the country is entering the peace process with huge economic and social gaps that add to the profound debt in terms of equality that the Nation is facing. This set of gaps should become the starting point for the strategies of the post-conflict that is beginning.

### GAP 1: RURAL COUNTRY – URBAN COUNTRY

The most important gap in Colombia today is the gap between rural and urban areas. The costs of a long-standing conflict that is primarily rural and the little priority given to the countryside and its population in the past decades determine that reducing these large differences should be a starting point to achieve a country with less inequality.

Although many factors have had an impact on the lagging Colombian countryside, the difficulties faced by small producers to develop productive land, to have access to markets, to overcome violence in areas with little to no State presence, among others, are being recognized as factors that have limited the reactivation capacity of the sector.

**FIGURE 3. GDP SHARE OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR, DANE**



Source: [López M. et al. 2011, 23]

After accounting for 16% of the country's GDP in 1994, the rural sector dropped to 6.1% in 2013 (Figure 4) [DNP, 2016]. Therefore, at least during the 1994 – 2009 period, the stagnation of activities in general, but in small

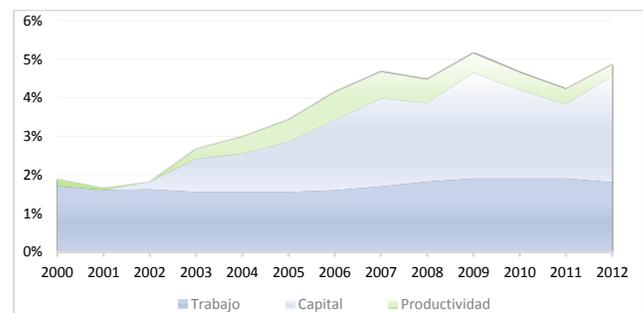
agriculture in particular, has become evident and is in contrast with the overall Colombian economy [López M. 2016, 48]. Furthermore, Colombia has one of the highest land access inequality indexes (Gini Index) in the world, of around 0.8 [OCDE, 2015]. All of the foregoing are factors that hinder access to food and food sovereignty.

The rural-urban gap is not limited to economic aspects; it also comprises dimensions concerning quality of life. The Basic Needs Index (BNI) is systematically greater in the countryside than in cities; for example, in the department of Guajira this gap reaches 50%, and there is a gap of around 40% in Norte de Santander, Boyacá and Antioquia.

### GAP 2: POTENTIAL GDP AND ACTUAL GDP

Potential GDP is the value of the entire production of an economy when all the available capital and labor are used at a normal pace; that is, without *overheating the machines*. The productive potential depends on both the amount of machines and the workforce, and their efficiency. With our resources, we could reach a growth rate of 4.5% (Chart 5); nevertheless, the most recent annual growth data (third quarter 2016) shows 1.2% [DANE 2016c]. Even if we assume that the country would improve this rate slightly, the product gap was estimated at two percentage points, a figure that is not very encouraging.

**FIGURE 5. POTENTIAL GDP GROWTH CONTRIBUTIONS**



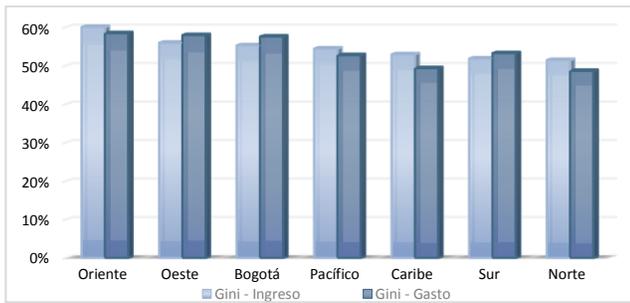
Source: [Zárate P. 2014]

“The conclusion of this exercise is that Colombia is not growing at the rate that it could. What can actually be put forward is a decrease in inflation rates. The impact of this information on FSN is obvious: unemployment increases, sectors of the population experience a decrease in income, and therefore, there is an impact on the food security of families and the nutrition of individuals. [López M. 2016]

### GAP 3: INCOME INEQUALITY

In Colombia, inequality is a constant factor throughout the country. In the regions, the income concentration range (Gini) is very high, especially in the Eastern region, with a Gini of 0.6. The lowest is found in the Northern region, but the difference is minimal; the fact that two of the seven regions are below the national level is notable (Figure 6).

**FIGURE 6. GINI BY REGIONS, 2006-2007, INCOME AND EXPENSES SURVEY**



Source: Prepared by CiSoe with [Bonilla 2008, 9] data

#### GAP 4: FISCAL SITUATION

One of the biggest problems that the Colombian economy faces is precisely its low level of taxes on GDP (Figure 2). Therefore, one of the of the critical issues for the Government was the pressing need for the Congress to pass a tax reform, which is expected to address the urgent need to reduce inequality in the country.

**FIGURE 2: FISCAL GAP**

Country	Tax income as GDP %
Colombia	23.5%
Chile	20.8%
OECD	34.6%

Source: CiSoe calculations with [DNP 2014; OECD 2016] data

By 2012, the average tax income in OECD countries was 34.6%, and in Colombia, including territorial entity taxes, it

#### INSTITUTIONAL GAPS: FOOD INSECURITY AND MALNUTRITION IN COLOMBIA

The Colombia that is getting ready to implement the peace process faces critical FSN gaps that impact the population's quality of life, particularly the most vulnerable populations.

According to ENSIN 2010 (National Nutrition Situation Survey of 2010) [MINSALUD et. al 2011], food insecurity in rural population households is higher, with a percentage of 57.5%; a number that is close 15 percentage points above the national number.

Although chronic malnutrition in in boys and girls under 5 has decreased compared to 1990, it reaches an average of 13.2% at a national level. It has a greater impact on the indigenous population reaching 29.5%, 31.3% for sons and daughters of mothers with no schooling, and 17% in rural populations, compared to 22.3% in urban populations (Figure 7).

**FIGURE 7. CHRONIC MALNUTRITION IN MINORS UNDER 5, ACCORDING TO PLACE OF ORIGIN**

was 17.9%. If we add the fact that quasi-fiscal charges are 23.5% of GDP [OECD et.al 2016].

#### WHAT IS THE COST OF CLOSING THE GAPS?

Closing the rural gap must be the top priority for the country during the next 15 years. The costs were calculated by the MTC, reaching an annual 1.2% of the GDP during this time. These costs demand a serious redistribution of the current government expenditures in the rural sector [DNP [2015].

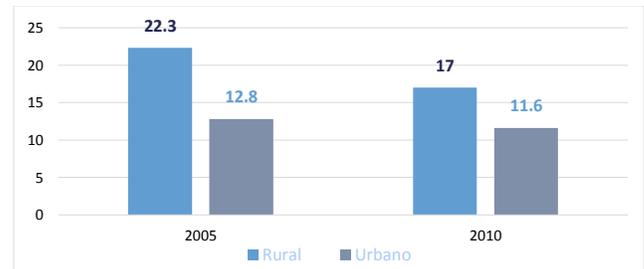
**TABLE 1. 2017 -2030 ADDITIONAL RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS (% OF GDP)**

Item	2017	2018	2024	2030
Health 1/	0.4	0.6	1.2	1.4
Care of the Elderly 2/	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9
Education 3/	0.7	1.0	1.5	1.8
Assistance and Reparation to Victims (additional) 4/	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5
Rural Housing 5/	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3
<b>Total Tax Requirements</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.9</b>
<b>Additional Requirements</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.9</b>

1/ Considering the demographic evolution and the epidemiological profile changes of an elderly population. 2/To address the poor population of over 65 years of age earning half a minimum wage. 3/ Includes extending school hours in 20% of establishments in 2018, 40% in 2024 and 80% in 2024, in addition to increasing university enrollment by 25% in 2018, 40% in 2024 and 80% in 2030 when compared to current levels and with assumptions similar to those of Programa Ser Pilo Paga. 4/ Based on estimates that say \$76 trillion are needed to provide reparation and assistance to victims, as opposed to the \$43 trillion that are currently estimated. 5/ The estimated deficit in quantitative and qualitative terms for rural housing is 3.2 million in solutions, which would have an annual cost of \$5.2 trillion to be addressed between 2016 and 20130.

Source: CiSoe calculations with [DANE 2016a] data

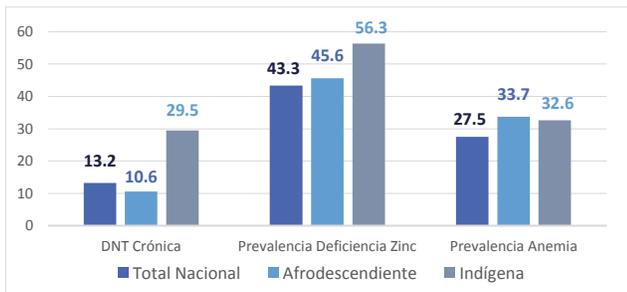
The figures are conclusive in this regard. Colombia must grow by at least 2.5% more than expected in 2017 to address the needs to close these gaps.



Source: [MINSALUD et. al 2005, 2011]

Moreover, the micronutrient deficiency in children under 5 reveals *hidden hunger* problems in all the regions of the country, with irreversible consequences on the development of boys and girls (Figure 8). This survey also shows that anemia caused by iron deficiency, which is considered to be a public health issue for these children under 5, reaches a prevalence of 43.9% in the department of Amazonas, 42.6% in Meta, 39.4% in Nariño, 38.9% in La Guajira and 37.5% in Córdoba, exceeding the national average of 27.5%.

**FIGURE 8. CHRONIC MALNUTRITION AND MICRONUTRIENT DEFICIENCIES IN CHILDREN UNDER FIVE, ACCORDING TO ETHNIC BACKGROUND**



Source: [MINSALUD et. al 2011]

The nutritional problems for the above indicators tend to be greater in rural areas, households where the head of household has no education, indigenous populations and African-descendent populations, thereby making it necessary to always review the data in a disaggregated way, due to the fact that averages make the problem in certain population groups or territories invisible.

According to figures reported by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, 3,756 deaths from malnutrition in children under 5 occurred during the 2005 to 2013 period, averaging 417 deaths per year. In 2013, the departments of Vichada, Vaupés, Amazonas, La Guajira, Chocó, Guaviare, Magdalena, Caquetá, Meta and Putumayo had rates that were significantly higher to the national rate of

6.77 deaths for every 100,000 children under 5; that is, 291 deaths per year. Mortality from this cause was in turn 8.92 times higher in the first quintile of poverty than in the last, and 72% of deaths are concentrated in 50% of the population with the lowest access to improved water [OSAN 2014].

In addition to the foregoing, there are high overweight rates, where 17.5% of boys and girls between 5 and 17 years of age are overweight to some degree. In the adult population, over half (51.2%) of the population has overweight problems that, as opposed to nutritional deficiencies, impact the entire population regardless of socioeconomic, regional or ethnic condition.

This situation reveals how the country has a nutritional dual-burden, where nutritional deficiencies have not been overcome -malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies- and at the same time, overweight compromises the future health and quality of life of thousands of boys and girls in Colombia.

The prevalence of a nutritional dual-burden in a household means where there is at least one child with delayed height and at least one overweight adult, is 8.18%. The department with the highest prevalence are Vaupés (23.39%), Guainía (18.57%), La Guajira (17.62%) and Amazonas (16.23%), figures from OSAN calculation based on ENSIN [2010] data.

## GAPS IN FSN PUBLIC POLICY: NO ONE IS RESPONSIBLE

Although it is true that the country has made progress in terms of regulations and public policy – particularly by passing the National Food and Nutritional Security Policy (Política Nacional de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional, PSAN), CONPES 113 [DNP 2007]—, FSN policies are not articulated, both among themselves and with social and economic policies. These disregard populations such as peasants and their FSN potential. This creates a significant implementation deficit at a national level regarding territorial realities. A new *ethnic annex* was just recently developed, wherein FSN actions for indigenous and African-descendent populations are put forward.

Implementation is another gap, arising from sectorial and institutional segmentation that has made interventions unarticulated and isolated from FSN planning processes in departments and municipalities. Currently, the institutional design does not allow for an effective implementation of the policies, as the National Planning Department (Departamento Nacional de Planeación, DNP) CONPES 1134 assessment recognizes, performed in 2016 [FIAN Colombia 2013].

It is also important to highlight the debt of the country in terms of undertaking and addressing *food sovereignty* as a key component to guarantee the right to food; a matter that is directly related to “the right of each nation to control its own food process according to its traditions, uses, customs, needs and strategic perspectives, and in harmony with all other human communities, the environment and future generations” [ProFamilia 2011].

This concept must complement the concept of FSN, due to the fact that it would enable the country to take a stance on free trade policies, transnational corporations, among others, which have been discouraging national production and weakening small producers, a key axis and foundation of the central strategy for rural development set forth in the peace agreement. Similarly, it has an impact in the implementation of family agriculture as the basis of local food production and provisioning.

## FSN AND ITS ROLE IN THE PEACE AGREEMENTS

WFP is present in territories in the country defined by the peace agreement to establish FARC concentration areas: La

Guajira, Córdoba, Antioquia (bajo Cauca), Chocó, Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Nariño, Caquetá, Putumayo, Arauca, Meta

and Norte de Santander [Martínez y Fernández 2006]. Being in these strategic locations allows the strengthening by WFP in two ways to contribute to closing the aforementioned gaps: on the one hand; moving progressively towards guaranteeing the right to food; and on the other, redefining its role towards achieving FSN goals within the United Nations System.

Having a strategic actions framework according to the country's needs and to positioning it in strategic FSN issues – wherein WFP has a greater response capacity on the field, from institutional, human resources and intervention-action methodology standpoints – will enable the joint move towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Broadly speaking, this review offered five major FSN recommendations for Colombia:

1. It continues to be necessary for WFP to provide humanitarian assistance during the coming years, with a greater focus on recovery, development and capacity-building, depending on the needs and priorities for each context.
2. The added value that WFP contributes with in peacebuilding is its ability to provide a differential, gender aware and nutrition-sensitive approach to the most vulnerable population that is located in remote and dispersed areas. Therefore, WFP can work with ethnic communities that are located in remote areas that have been hit by the conflict.
3. With presence in the territory, WFP should give greater emphasis to activities to strengthen capacities and provide technical assistance at a territorial level.
4. WFP in Colombia should direct its efforts to strengthen South-South cooperation mechanisms both in and outside the country, in order for resources, technology and know-how on nutrition, resilience, emergency preparation, and gender issues to be shared.
5. There are several innovative elements that WFP can continue to strengthen in Colombia, including cash-based transfers, local purchases to small producers' associations; and sustainable and friendly technology solutions.

#### WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR WFP IN COLOMBIA

The post-conflict scenario represents an opportunity to overcome existing problems of food and nutritional insecurity:

- Contributing towards the country's acknowledgement of food insecurity gaps as being a profound debt and solving them; this is a condition to contribute to overcoming the causes of the conflict itself.

- Supporting change in the organizational schemes of institutional intervention in order to achieve an effective articulation between all public and private actors involved, and the effective development of joint work between the national and territorial levels.
- Providing assistance in a full-scale fight against corruption, brokered by outsourcing social programs, supporting civil society through its effective participation and empowerment on the subject matter in order to facilitate the recognition and taking into account the environmental, population, cultural and food specifics of each territory.
- Encouraging a plural and differentiated view that privileges local, short distance consumption, and supporting the design of effective and sustainable public policies that meet the complexities of FSN in order to consolidate food as a human right within the post-conflict framework.
- Build institutional capacity to articulate how the issues of food and nutritional insecurity will be addressed, which in turn implies addressing the country's territories in an integrated manner taking the process from the local level to the national level.
- This also implies strengthening territorial capacities to manage local information, where WFP can create alternative FSN information systems, built in a participatory way at a local level, as an input for planning processes that will enable decision-making that arises from local issues and needs.
- Repositioning food and nutritional education as a transforming agent for knowledge, capabilities and practices, considering family environment, school and the community, which are opportunity scenarios in which positive and permanent changes can be promoted in terms of food availability, consumption and biological utilization of foods to enhance and/or reaffirm healthy food habits in the population.
- Developing probity and transparency mechanisms for local and territorial management, considering the presence of WFP in strategic locations in the country, where it can arrange control and social participation processes that will enable decreasing corruption processes, building an active citizenry and active institutions facing these issues.

The new FSN that stems from acknowledging its huge complexity, which requires multilateral bodies to bear the responsibility of supporting efforts to make SDG2 *Zero Hunger* a reality in order for it to go beyond being a secondary goal and become a core development priority. Therefore, WFP must be United Nations agency to lead and broker changes in order for SDGs 1 to 17 to be understood as determining factors of SDG 2, bearing in mind that all of

them are interrelated with FSN.

Due to the overarching character of this new way of understanding FSN, the main responsibility that WFP has – which is distinct in this area – is to make the different United Nations agencies define new roles to reposition FSN in the Global Agenda.

This can only be achieved by conducting deeper studies on the subject matter and publishing results so that they may be a starting point for each institution to find its radius of action in FSN. The WFP must promote a defined role for each of the agencies in the system that clearly outlines their responsibilities in complying with said roles, and carry out integrated work with the governments in order for the ever-insufficient resources to be optimized vs. the

magnitude of what is required to achieve FSN in the population, the Colombian population in this case.

It is key that the new FSN dimensions under development be restructured in the internal WFP agenda to make the transition from being an emergency-focused entity to an entity that supports development.

The experience that WFP has in various regions of the world, its permanent contact with communities, particularly with those in critical situations, allows it to bring to the field all the strategies that link FSN –its priority objective, now more than ever – with productive inclusion, commercialization, and transfer of technology activities, among others, that align to its mission as an institution.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

SDGs are being discussed for the first time, a Global Agenda for 2030 that channels the efforts of developing countries and the industrialized world, and where everyone must be a part of the solution. Thus, what should be the Global Food Security System begins to be built.

- The new FSN approach stems from acknowledging its immense complexity, it requires multilateral bodies to undertake the responsibility of joining efforts towards making SDG2 *Zero Hunger* the focus of development priorities.
- Due to the overarching nature of FSN, the main responsibility faced by WFP is to have the various United Nations agencies define new roles in repositioning FSN in the Global Agenda. WFP must fulfill the role of inter-agency coordinator, and serve as the spokesperson of this issue with every government.
- A key task for WFP is to identify which development aspects to focus on, without disregarding its humanitarian tasks - always indispensable.
- The experience that WFP has in various regions of the world allows it to bring new strategies to the field that are aligned to its mission, linking FSN to productive inclusion activities, commercialization and the transfer of technology.
- The role of WFP in Colombia is key given that the country faces a deep contradiction; as a middle-income country,

it should not have the child mortality problems that occur due to malnutrition.

- The link between Macroeconomics, Agriculture and FSN requires that the Ministry of Agriculture be the axis of these strategies. Colombia cannot continue to leave decisions on this matter solely in the hands of traditional institutions – Ministry of Health, ICBF (Colombian Institute for Family Welfare) Prosperidad Social (Social Prosperity), among others-. WFP is appropriate institution to guide Colombia in this direction.
- In Colombia, FSN has ceased to be a marginal and sectoral issue and has become a State issue. The government must also ensure that the entities executing government actions review their current schemes and adjust to the broader and more overarching vision to improve their efficiency on FSN and development. The advisory of WFP is crucial to the Colombian government.
- This overarching vision of FSN as a socio-economic strategy must be the new model for post-conflict public policy, where economic matters would become integrated with FSN. With the advisory of WFP, Colombia could become the pilot in Latin America for this innovative vision. Only then will Colombia become a part of the new *Global Food Security System* that is under construction.

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