

## NTS Bulletin January 2012

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## NTS VIEWPOINT

### India's Food Security Bill: A Waste or Win for the Hungry?

The Indian Parliament is expected to soon pass a bold but polarising National Food Security Bill which pledges to deliver the 'right to food' to its people. Undertaking to provide subsidised grains and food assistance to 64 per cent of its population, the 'Food Bill' is expected to be popular with voters ahead of a key election year, but critics argue that it will do little to address food insecurity and may even exacerbate the country's food woes.

Few would question that urgent and drastic measures are needed to address India's food insecurity. The Global Hunger Index recently positioned India in the 'alarming' category, with 21 per cent of the population undernourished, more than 43.5 per cent of children under 5 underweight and child malnutrition rates worse than those found in sub-Saharan Africa. Poor infrastructure, transport and storage facilities typically lead to 30–40 per cent of total food produced being spoiled between harvest and retail. However, with India currently being a strong producer of food, the main barrier to achieving food security for its masses is lack of physical and economic access to an adequate and nutritious food basket which includes grain, vegetables and pulses. The Food Bill primarily addresses just one aspect of India's food insecurity: access to grain.

The Food Bill aims to benefit 75 per cent of India's rural population and 50 per cent of the urban population. For a period as yet undefined, priority households will receive 7kg of grain per person each month and free meals will be received by lactating mothers, children, the destitute and the homeless. While the Bill's right to food mandate is encouraging, there are concerns regarding the government's capacity to deliver it. Critics of India's existing food welfare programme – the Public Distribution Scheme (PDS) – argue that the grain currently distributed is of low quality, inopportunistically delivered, stored in unhygienic conditions, lacking in micronutrients, known to contain pesticide residues, and subject to onselling to rice traders by beneficiaries and corrupt PDS officials. Commentator Rupa Subramanya laments that the PDS' involvement in Food Bill operations will result in it providing "the right to rotting food, inefficiently delivered".

Public debate on the Food Bill is, however, mostly focused on its economic implications, with many concerned that India simply cannot afford the USD20 billion required to implement it. Pundits also question the rationality of heavy-handed government interventions on both the supply and demand sides of the food equation through the Bill in combination with other welfare policy measures. A lack of synergy with agricultural development is also a glaring shortfall of the Food Bill, particularly given that production will need to increase substantially in coming decades to meet growing demand for food.

Beyond concerns about India's administrative, logistical and economic capacity to deliver the Bill's promises, the implications of transforming food from 'commodity' to 'public good' on such a scale in a competitive (and developing) economy are significant. At the very least, market distortions seem likely. Some critics point out that improving access in a market-based food system calls for enabling and incentivising policies rather than a paternalistic approach such as that which defines much of the Food Bill. There have also been calls for safety nets in the form of cash and vouchers instead of food hand-outs.

The Bill does contain several provisions that could be used to address potential future problems, such as the as yet unspecified time frame of the programme, the scale of entitlements and the cost-sharing arrangements, but it will take immense political will after the implementation of such a weighty programme to tackle the structural issues facing India's food system.

*Contributed by Sally Trethewie*

### Additional Info:

- 'Is the Proposed Food Bill the Panacea for Feeding India?', *Oryza News*, 25 November 2011.
- Agarwal, Vibhuti and Shefali Anand, 'Food Security Bill: Good for Politics, Terrible for Economy', *The Wall Street Journal*, 19

December 2011.

- Jagannathan, R., 'It's Not about Feeding the Poor: 10 Myths about the Food Bill', *Firstpost*, 20 December 2011.
- Dreze, Jean, 'Hunger Must Go', *Hindustan Times*, 21 December 2011.
- Subramanya, Rupa, 'Economics Journal: The Right to Rotting Food, Inefficiently Delivered', *The Wall Street Journal*, 26 December 2011.
- 'India's Food Securities Bill Not So Secure for Farmers, Warns Food Minister', *Oryza News*, 27 December 2011.
- Swaminathan, M.S., 'Holistic Food Security for India', *Financial Chronicle*, 28 December 2011.
- Vyawahare, Malavika, 'Will the Food Security Bill Fight Hunger?', *The New York Times*, 2 January 2012.

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## CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY AND NATURAL DISASTERS



### News & Commentaries

- 'ASEAN Prioritises Disaster Risk Financing and Insurance', Press Release, *United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)*, 8 November 2011.
- 'SEAsia Floods Cost \$6.3 Bln in Lost Output: UN', *AFP*, 9 December 2011.
- Pirkle, Hayden, 'Activists Criticize Chinese Damming Projects at UN Climate Change Conference', *bikyamasr*, 9 December 2011.
- Morgan, Jennifer and Edward Cameron, 'Reflections on COP 17 in Durban', *WRI (World Resources Institute) Insights*, 16 December 2011.
- Sharma, Yojana, 'Tackling the Data Gaps that Could Scupper the Green Economy', *SciDev.Net*, 21 December 2011.
- Tamindael, Otniel, 'Trash Bank Program to Be Implemented in Several Regions', *Antara News*, 23 December 2011.
- 'New Floods Hit Philippines, Straining Washi Rescue', *Jakarta Globe*, 28 December 2011.
- 'Mining, Plantation Disputes to Intensify', *The Jakarta Post*, 29 December 2011.

### Selected Publications

- United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), 2011, *Preparing for Rio+20: Redefining Sustainable Development*, UNISDR Discussion Paper, New York: UNISDR Secretariat.

This discussion paper, produced in preparation for the Rio+20, the United Nations Sustainable Development Conference, outlines the significance and benefits of disaster reduction in attaining sustainable development. It also defines different opportunities for governments to integrate disaster risk measures in their development agenda. Such considerations are becoming more vital given the increasingly complex interdependence among issues related to energy needs, development and disaster management. Major events such as the Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami, in 2011 and the Gulf of Mexico oil spill in 2010 are clear reflections of this.

- Nellemann, C., R. Verma and L. Hislop (eds), 2011, *Women at the Frontline of Climate Change: Gender Risks and Hopes. A Rapid Response Assessment*, Arendal: United Nations Environment Programme/GRID-Arendal.

This publication highlights the risks and vulnerabilities faced by women in light of the increasing frequency and intensity of weather-related disasters. While these disasters may result in negative economic and social implications for women, the publication also highlights the potential of increasing women's resilience and adaptive capacity in the face of future disasters.

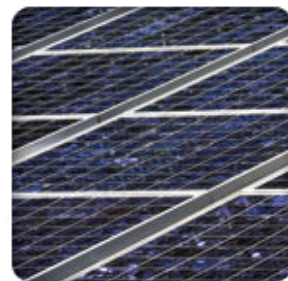
- Doherty, Emma and Heike Schroeder, 2011, 'Forest Tenure and Multi-level Governance in Avoiding Deforestation under REDD+', *Global Environmental Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 4, pp. 66–88.

While the international community has the task of initiating policies to mitigate climate change, it is important that the implementation of such policies do not jeopardise sources of economic livelihood at the local level. This paper investigates the role of forest tenure in creating a sustainable and effective mechanism for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation Plus (REDD+) and highlights the importance of ensuring more nuanced and locally specific understandings of tenure security and ownership for effective REDD+ implementation.

### Events & Announcements

- 'Towards Democratic Environmental Governance at Global Level', 31 Jan 2012, Paris, France.
- 'Call for Papers: 11th Conference of Environmental Justice and Global Citizenship', 3–5 July 2012, Oxford, UK.

## ENERGY AND HUMAN SECURITY



### News & Commentaries

- Daly, Matthew, 'US Trade Panel to Probe Solar Dispute with China', *AP*, 2 December 2011.
- Koswanage, Niluksi, 'Analysis: No Stopping Big Hydro Projects, Despite Lao Veto', *Reuters*, 14 December 2011.
- Willis, Rebecca, 'Energy Debate Must Consider Demand Not Just Supply', *Guardian*, 16 December 2011.
- Dvorak, Phred and Mitsuru Obe, 'Japan Plots 40-year Nuclear Cleanup', *The Wall Street Journal*, 22 December 2011.
- Bai, Jim and Aizhu Chen, 'China Reforms Shale Gas Price, Pilots New Scheme', *Reuters*, 27 December 2011.
- Al Azhari, Muhamad and Ririn Radiawati Kusuma, 'Demand to Continue Stoking Indonesian Coal's Growth', *Jakarta Globe*, 27 December 2011.
- 'Japan Keen on Having Civil Nuclear Deal with India', *The Economic Times*, 28 December 2011.
- Bajaj, Vikas, 'In Solar Power, India Begins Living Up to Its Own Ambitions', *The New York Times*, 28 December 2011.

### Selected Publications

- Jamil, Sofiah, 2011, 'Falling from Grace: Nuclear Energy in Japan Post Fukushima', *NTS Alert*, November (Issue 1), Singapore: RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies for NTS-Asia.

The Fukushima crisis has exposed Japan's excessive reliance on nuclear energy and demonstrated its weak governance. Japan's poor disaster management has prompted calls for an overhaul of its nuclear energy governance framework and an adjustment of its energy mix. Apart from these, improvements in energy efficiency, genuine attempts at restructuring of governance processes, and reconciliation among the relevant stakeholders are also crucial for Japan's energy security. Japan's experience serves as a lesson for other Asian countries that are keen on developing nuclear energy.

- Dumienki, Zbigniew, 2011, 'On the Fast Train to Nuclear Disaster? Bias and Phobia as Challenges to China's Pursuit of Nuclear Energy', *NTS Alert*, November (Issue 2), Singapore: RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies for NTS-Asia.

This article examines concerns and paranoia over the safety issues in China's nuclear energy development, which has been intensified by the Fukushima nuclear crisis and the Wenzhou high-speed train crash in July 2011. It looks critically at the negative comments in the media, and in academic publications, on China's development and its nuclear energy programme, and offers a wider and more optimistic perspective on both China's progress and the safety of nuclear energy.

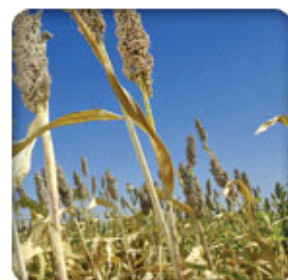
- Schofield, Clive (ed.), 2011, *Maritime Energy Resources in Asia: Energy and Geopolitics*, NBR Special Report No. 35, Washington: The National Bureau of Research.

This report provides an overview of maritime disputes in the East China Sea, the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand. It then examines the energy factors behind these disputes, and explores potential consequences and solutions.

### Events and Announcements

- 'World Future Energy Summit', 16–19 January 2012, Abu Dhabi, UAE.
- '2nd International Conference on Future Environment and Energy', 26–28 February 2012, Singapore.

## FOOD AND HEALTH SECURITY



### News & Commentaries

- "Energy-smart" Agriculture Needed to Escape Fossil Fuel Trap', Press Release, *FAO*, 29 November 2011.
- Wongruang, Piyaporn, 'Food Security Key Issue in Mekong Dam Debate', *Bangkok Post*, 11 December 2011.
- Hongzhou, Zhang, 'China's Food Conundrum: Insecurity of the Rural Abandoned', *RSIS Commentaries*, 12 December 2011.
- 'Three-year Study Identifies Key Interventions to Reduce Maternal, Newborn and Child Deaths', Press Release, *World Health*

Organization (WHO), 15 December 2011.

- 'Viet Nam: UN-backed Study Shows Well-being Disparities for Children, Women', *UN News Centre*, 16 December 2011.
- Wan, William, 'U.S., North Korea Resume Talks on Food Aid', *The Washington Post*, 16 December 2011.
- Marasigan, Fernan, 'Pro-administration Legislator Seeks House Probe into "Massive Corruption" at NFA', *Business Mirror*, 28 December 2011.
- 'Vietnam: From Rice to Shrimps and Ginger – Adapting to Saltwater Intrusion', *IRIN*, 28 December 2011.

### Selected Publications

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 2011, *The State of the World's Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture (SOLAW) – Managing Systems at Risk*, Rome and London: FAO and Earthscan.

The world's food production systems will face increased pressure in coming decades due to the degradation and scarcity of agricultural land and water resources. Given the projected need for a 70 per cent increase in production by 2050 to meet growing food demands, effective resource management is essential for minimising food insecurity. The inaugural publication of the FAO's key report on the status of the world's land and water resources, which will be published every three to five years, comprehensively outlines key issues and provides recommendations for managing systems at risk.

- International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), 2011, *Fighting Hunger in a Changing Climate: How Can Agriculture Respond?*, Project Paper, Washington, DC.

Climate change poses significant challenges for global food security given the potentially devastating environmental impacts on the agricultural sector. Leading scientists from the BRICS countries, Indonesia and the US discussed agricultural adaptation measures at the International Conference on Climate Change and Food Security in Beijing in November 2011, the outcome of which was this project paper containing the group's recommendations to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) delegates at the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) in Durban. Key recommendations include the establishment of a work programme that comprises: (a) strengthening public sector agricultural research in 12 priority areas; and (b) increasing the amount, appropriateness and accessibility of spatial data.

- United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), 2011, *Scaling Up the Community-based Health Workforce for Emergencies*, New York.

This joint statement highlights the vital role that the community-based health workforce plays in all phases of emergency risk management. It also seeks to promote the scaling-up of the community-based health workforce; and encourages governments and supporting partners to reinforce the workforce by strengthening and preparing existing health systems, and providing resources in support of local action to reduce health risks and manage emergencies.

### Events & Announcements

- 'Food Secure Arab World: A Roadmap for Policy and Research', 6–7 February 2012, Beirut, Lebanon.
- 'ICFS 2012 : International Conference on Food Security', 19–20 July 2012, Toronto, Canada.

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## **INTERNAL AND CROSS-BORDER CONFLICT**

### News & Commentaries

- 'Myanmar Seeks Final Peace Pacts with Ethnic Rebels', *AP*, 16 December 2011.
- 'Papua New Guinea: Political Impasse Threatens Stability', *IRIN*, 16 December 2011.
- 'Sri Lanka: Report Fails to Advance Accountability', *Human Rights Watch*, 16 December 2011.
- 'Border Talks Finally Under Way', *Bangkok Post*, 21 December 2011.
- 'Papua New Guinea: Population Growth Fuels Conflict', *IRIN*, 21 December 2011.
- 'Suu Kyi Says Becoming an MP Will "Enhance Cooperation"', *The Irrawaddy*, 21 December 2011.
- Padden, Brian, 'Special Autonomy Works in Indonesia's Aceh Province, but Not Papua', *Voice of America*, 22 December 2011.
- 'Cambodia: Revise or Abandon Draft NGO Law', *Human Rights Watch*, 23 December 2011.



### Selected Publications

- Druke, Luise, 2011, *Mobilizing for Refugee Protection: Reflections on the 60th Anniversary of UNHCR and the 1951 Refugee Convention*, Research Paper No. 227, Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

This paper recaps some of the UNHCR's challenges and accomplishments in protecting refugees over the past six decades and identifies potential directions and trends of research on refugee protection. It notes that collaboration and coordination between and among different sectors are needed for effective provision of protection.

- Thawngmung, Ardeth Maung, 2011, *Beyond Armed Resistance: Ethnonational Politics in Burma (Myanmar)*, Policy Studies No. 62, Honolulu: East-West Center.

This report examines the role of non-armed ethnic members in ethnic politics in Myanmar; a perspective different from the conventional conflict-focused approach. Non-armed ethnic actors with vested interests in maintaining the status quo have supported the government and thus undermined the legitimacy of the armed resistance movement. However, members of these same groups have also contributed to protecting the interests of ethnic nationalities, albeit in an indirect way due to the restrictive environment. The role of these non-armed actors in future national reconciliation efforts thus deserves further study.

### Events & Announcements

- 'Peacebuilding Peacelearning Conference', 17–19 February 2012, Colorado, US.
- 'Call for Papers – Asylum and Displacement in the Twenty-first Century: Performing Community, Crisis and Belonging', 20–21 April 2012, London, UK.

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## TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

### News & Commentaries

- 'Ice is New Hot Drug for Youth Here', *The New Paper*, 7 December 2011.
- 'Q/A: Inside the Murky World of Arms Dealing', *CNN*, 12 December 2011.
- Korecki, Natasha, 'New Book Exposes World of Sex Crimes against Children', *Chicago Sun-Times*, 17 December 2011.
- McGeown, Kate, 'Somali Piracy Takes Heavy Toll on Philippine Sailors', *BBC*, 19 December 2011.
- 'Made in India, Faked in China – \$5bn Loss', *The Times of India*, 1 January 2012.
- Ramsey, Geoffrey, 'Have the Zetas Replaced the Sinaloa as Mexico's Most Powerful Cartel?', *In Sight*, 3 January 2012.
- Ehrlich, Richard S., 'Bangkok Gun Shops: What's Inside and Why Tourists Can't Buy', *CNNGo*, 2 January 2012.
- Siegel, Matt, 'Marijuana Use Most Rampant in Australia, Study Finds', *The New York Times*, 6 January 2012.
- Lam, Anita, 'Counterfeit Goods Losing Attraction', *South China Morning Post*, 6 January 2012.



### Selected Publications

- International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC), 2011, *Comparative Report on Types of Intervention Used for Youth at Risk of Joining a Street Gang: Practices from Belgium, Canada and France*, Montreal.

The objective of this comparative analysis report was to examine modes of intervention in Belgium, Canada and France that represent effective means of identifying at-risk youth and promoting dialogue and gang disaffiliation. The analysis finds that despite the distinctive characteristics of each of these countries, the modes of intervention displayed numerous similarities. The term 'street gangs' may not be used in Belgium and France but 'urban gangs' or 'youth gangs' prevention seems to be carried out in roughly the same way as it is in Canada; by offering young people sound alternatives as well as support and guidance for the personal, social and academic dimensions of their lives.

- Kar, Dev and Sarah Freitas, 2011, *Illicit Financial Flows from Developing Countries over the Decade Ending 2009*, Washington DC: Global Financial Integrity (GFI).

This report provides estimates of illicit financial flows (IFFs) from developing countries over the decade 2000–2009 based on balance of payments (BoP), bilateral trade, and external debt data reported by member countries to the IMF and the World Bank. The most notable finding in this report is that in 2009, IFFs from developing countries, led by the top ten exporters of illicit capital, have declined by 41 per cent over the last year due to the global economic crisis.

- Hardoon, Deborah and Finn Heinrich, 2011, *Daily Lives and Corruption, Public Opinion in South Asia*, Berlin: Transparency International.

A new survey of six South Asian countries, i.e., Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka by Transparency International found that more than one in three people who deal with public services said they pay bribes. In previous surveys of this nature, only Sub-saharan Africa had a higher rate of bribe-paying. Political parties and the police are found to be the most corrupt institutions in all six countries followed closely by the parliament and public officials.

### **Events & Announcements**

- 'Filling the Gaps: Integrated Approaches to Crime Prevention and Safety, International Centre for the Prevention of Crime's 10th Colloquium and Governance Meetings', 20–23 February 2012, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 'ABA/ABA Money Laundering Enforcement Conference', 11–13 November 2012, Washington, DC, US.

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### **About the Centre:**

The Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies was inaugurated by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretary-General Dr Surin Pitsuwan in May 2008. The Centre maintains research in the fields of Food Security, Climate Change, Energy Security, Health Security as well as Internal and Cross-Border Conflict. It produces policy-relevant analyses aimed at furthering awareness and building capacity to address NTS issues and challenges in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. The Centre also provides a platform for scholars and policymakers within and outside Asia to discuss and analyse NTS issues in the region.

In 2009, the Centre was chosen by the MacArthur Foundation as a lead institution for the MacArthur Asia Security Initiative, to develop policy research capacity and recommend policies on the critical security challenges facing the Asia-Pacific.

The Centre is also a founding member and the Secretariat for the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia). More information on the Centre can be found at [www.rsis.edu.sg/nts](http://www.rsis.edu.sg/nts).