While global poverty figures continue their downward trend, recent reports on the state of hunger, food security and nutrition indicate a reversal of trends, with hunger on the rise and nutrition indicators stagnant (undernutrition) or deteriorating (obesity). Countries and regions of conflict and instability are a major factor, where multiple stresses have become facts of life and inhibit progress. It is important to untangle the factors which undermine the effectiveness of food security interventions and then make their mutual and systemic interactions explicit.

The consortium of institutions in this Food for All Talk explores the development of a multi/transdisciplinary method to assess the impact of very diverse types of shocks on food systems, affecting food security and human security. The main innovation is to consider not only the primary location or direct impact of such a shock, but also the wider more systemic impact caused by linkages to other areas, sectors or individuals. Intuitively, it follows the logic of a series of dominos falling, which could in the end lead to (food) insecurity and instability.

By bringing together a multi-disciplinary research team, the strength of the approach is the combination of biophysical and economic modeling with political and socio-economic analysis. The domino model approach allows for tracking how food security relates to human security and stability, and vice versa. Its multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary approach allows for going up from the household to local and regional level as well as the other way around from a regional or local phenomenon to the household level.
Dr Cornelia van Wesenbeeck is an expert in general equilibrium theory and applications, in particular focusing on the assessment of impact of policy changes, and on the inclusion of biophysical characteristics in economic modelling, in spatially explicit models of production, transport and natural flows. In addition, she has extensive experience in spatially explicit statistical analysis of survey and map data, and profiling of vulnerable groups. Dr. Van Wesenbeeck holds a PhD in Economics and is presently director of the Amsterdam Centre for World Food Studies, a centre of excellence at the Free University of Amsterdam.

Tobias von Lossow is an expert on water and security in the Middle East and Africa. He works on conflict and cooperation over - or related to - water, hydro-politics and water diplomacy in transboundary river basins, particularly the Euphrates and Tigris, the Nile and the Congo. Moreover, he focuses on natural resource management, climate change impact and sustainable development in these regions. In addition, he works on the role of water during armed conflicts, in fragile settings and post-conflict situations, as for instance in Iraq, Syria, Ethiopia, Sudan or the DRC. A German citizen with a track record at the Free University of Berlin he also sits on the Advisory Council of Arizona State University’s McCain Institute for International Leadership “Next Generation Leadership Program”. He is a research Fellow at Clingendael – Netherlands Institute for International Relations.

Hester Biemans holds a PhD in Earth System Sciences from Wageningen University (2006). Her research focusses on quantitative assessments of water-food-land interactions in a changing climate, both at global and regional scale. She works on the application of large scale water resources and crop production models for the evaluation of adaptation measures to support decision making. For almost 10 years she has been involved in projects in South Asia. She is senior researcher at the Environmental Sciences Group of Wageningen University & Research.

The Food for All Talks is a series initiated by the Food for All Partnership of the World Bank Group and the Netherlands. They deliver new insights on strategic issues and operational questions around agriculture and food value chains for the WBG.

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