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# Vulnerability To Natural Disaster Shocks And Implications For Regional Food Security In Southern Africa

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## Focus

- How to ensure an efficient and effective humanitarian response to drought emergencies while avoiding negative impacts on long-term development objectives
  - Examine this through the lens of the 2002/03 crisis
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## Four Points

- Early Warning worked in Southern Africa in 2002/03
    - No reason it can't in the future
    - This has policy and programmatic implications
  
  - Market proponents and the relief community both need to examine their assumptions
    - The concept and empirical reality of *vulnerability*
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## Four Points (cont'd)

- Real trade reform requires the *professionalization of customs services*
  
  - Investment in Strategic Grain Reserves (SGRs) is likely to hinder the real investments that are needed
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## Early Warning Chronology

- April 2002

- SADC early warning and FEWSNET warn of “imminent production shortfalls”

- September 2002

- FEWSNET estimates 14.4m people require 1,051,000 MT of food aid
  - 3.3m MT total estimated cereals gap
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## Early Warning Chronology (2)

- 31 December 2002

- 15.25m people
- 395,000 MT food aid had been “received”
- 1,359,000 MT formal imports had arrived
- About half the estimated gap filled by registered inflows

- 31 March 2003

- Response had been sufficient to avoid “humanitarian crisis and potential famine”
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*Early warning clearly worked ...*

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*Early warning clearly worked ...*

*... but was it “right”?*

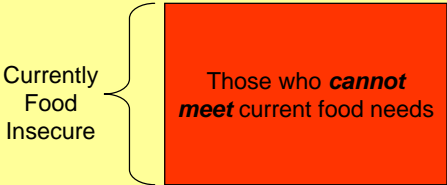
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Food Security, Vulnerability, and Market Demand for Food during Food Crises

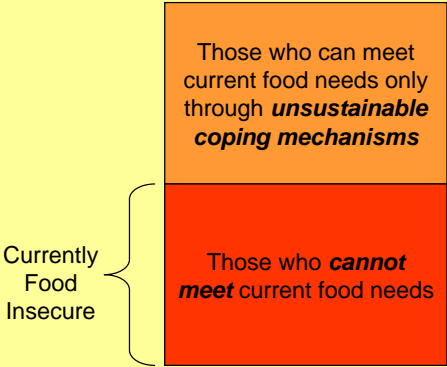
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Those who *cannot*  
*meet* current food needs

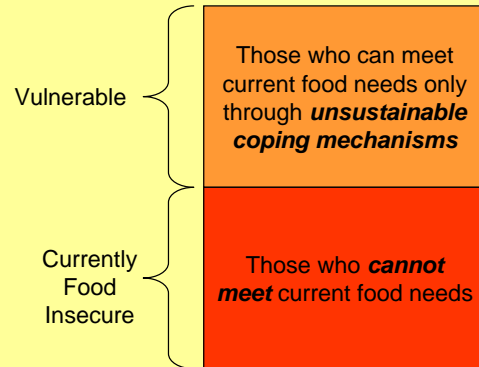
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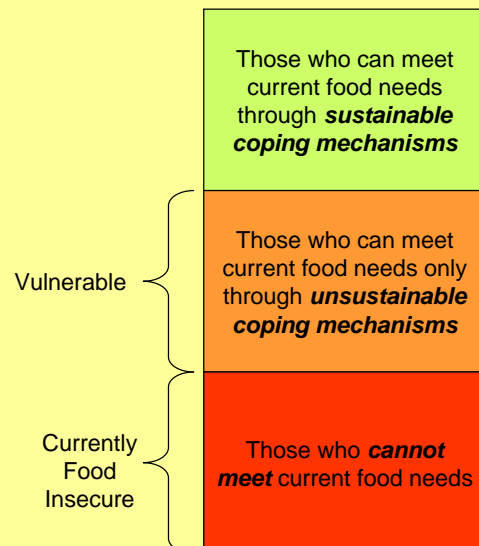
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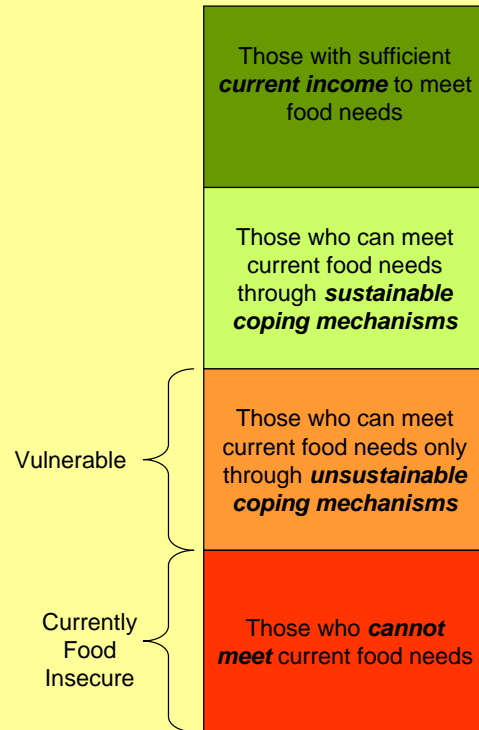
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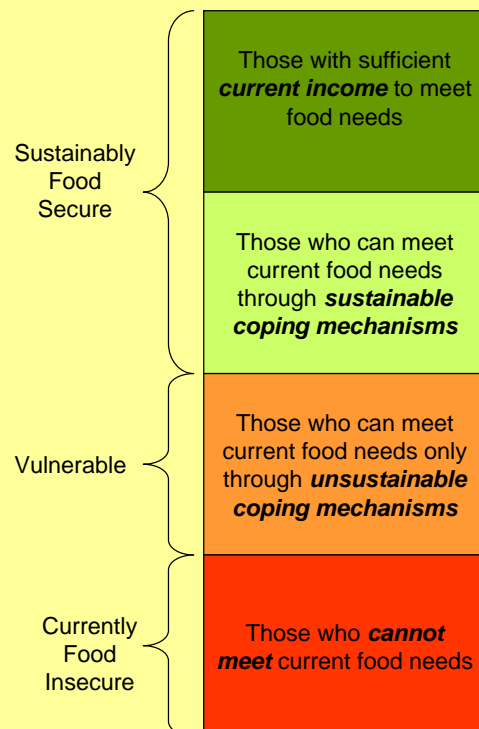
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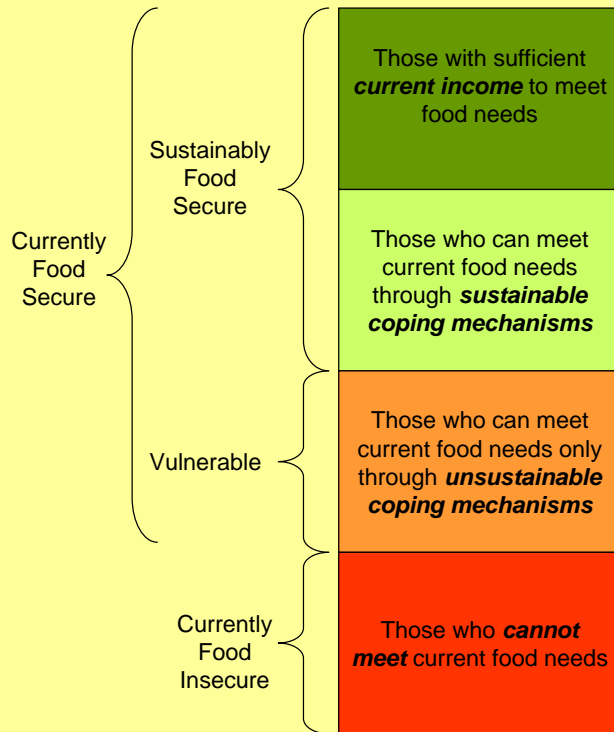


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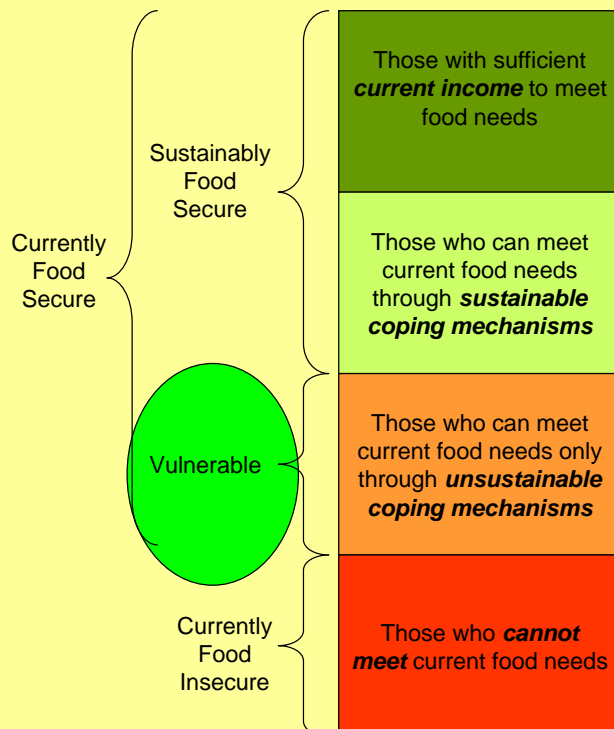




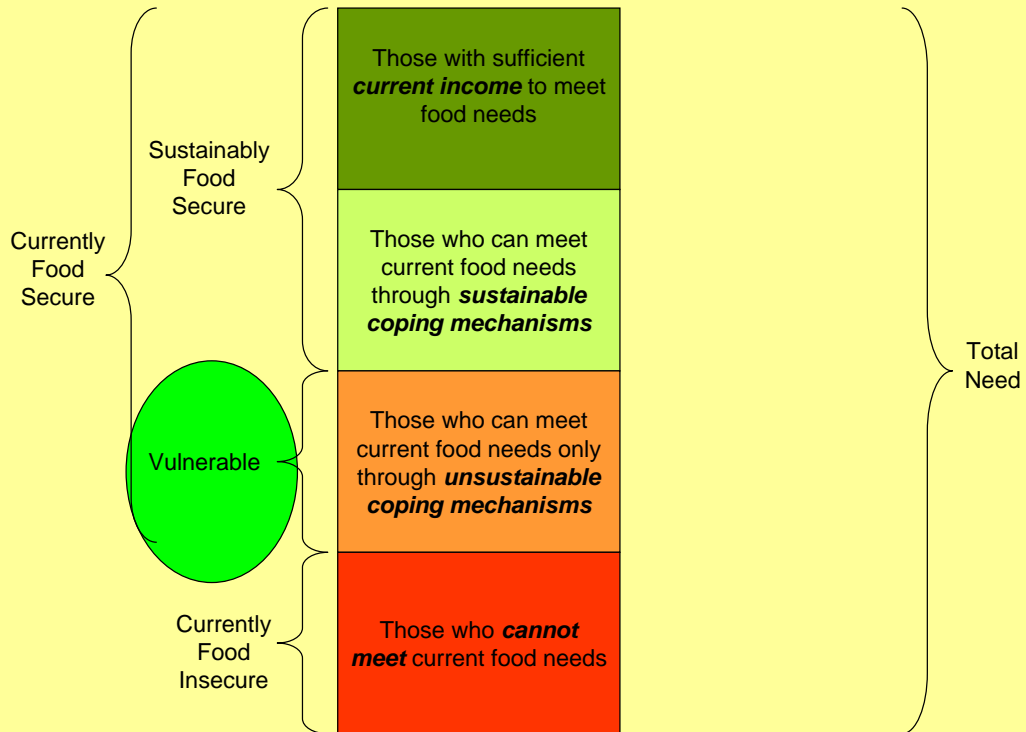
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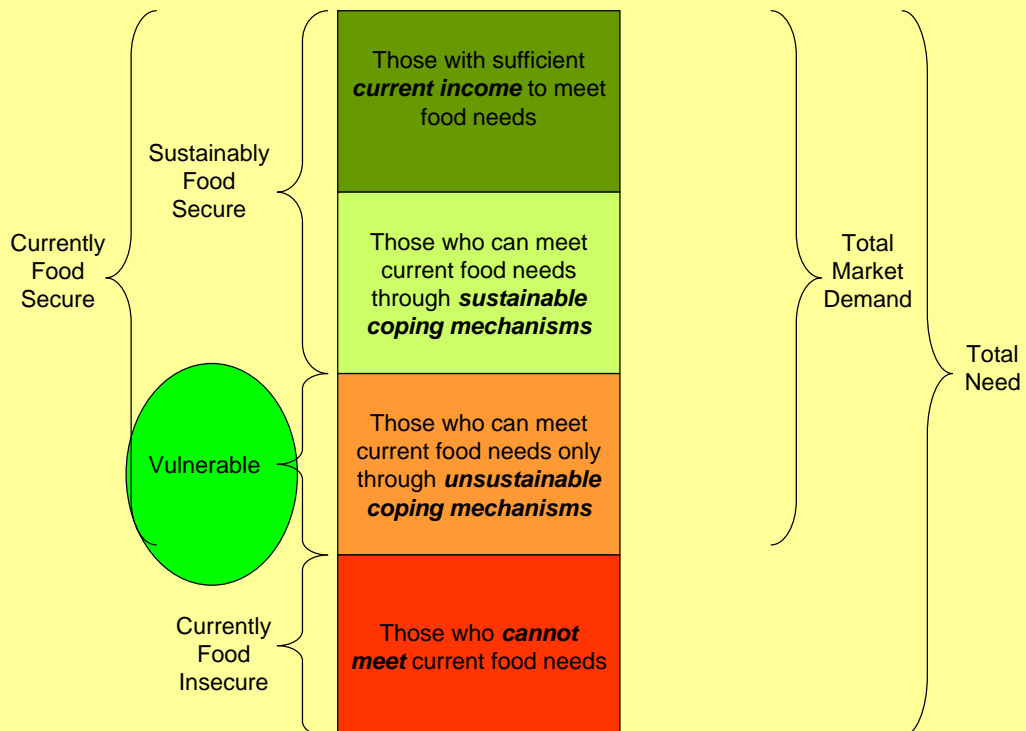
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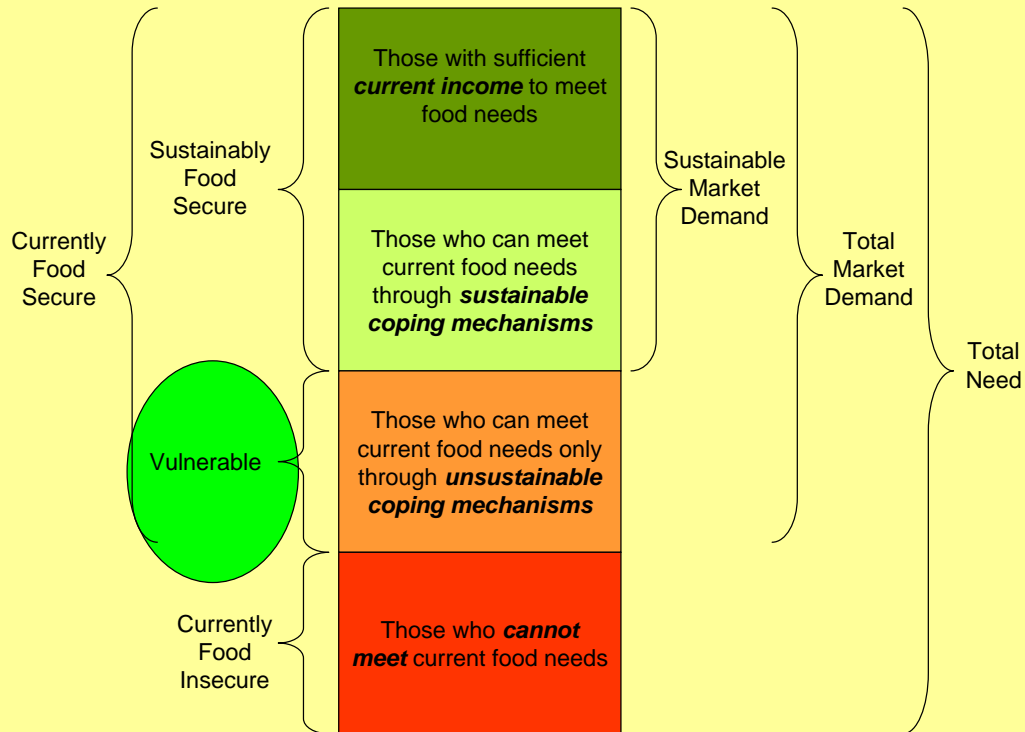
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## Food Security, Vulnerability, and Market Demand for Food during Food Crises



*In the end, this is an empirical question ...*

*In the end, this is an empirical  
question ...*

*... and we don't have enough  
empirical information*

*In the end, this is an empirical  
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*... and we don't have enough  
empirical information*

*Important area of collaborative  
research*

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## What *do* we know?

- Food aid needs were overestimated
  - No more than 77% of estimated food aid needs had reached beneficiaries by end of March 2003
  - Probably and perhaps substantially less

*Yet “the crisis was averted”*

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## What *do* we know? (2)

- Food balance sheets are an imperfect but necessary starting point in planning
  - Could be improved by incorporating *consumer response to relative prices*
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## What *do* we know? (3)

- The Malawi government imported far too much
    - Did not consider informal imports at all
    - Prices fell dramatically
    - Government incurred very large costs selling imported grain at low prices
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## What *do* we know? (4)

- The Zambian government has frequently hindered private sector import response in the past
    - Did better in 2002/03, but still needs improvement
  
  - Southern Mozambique, with no non-tariff barriers to trade, historically (and in 2002/03) has the most stable maize prices in the region (outside of South Africa)
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## What *do* we know? (5)

- Despite all these difficulties ...
  - Private imports provided at least 75% of the inflow in response to the crisis

*Markets played a major role in the response!  
... and could have played a larger role*

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## How could the trade response be further enhanced?

- A long list of reforms that governments need to make, with donor assistance
    - Clarify roles, simplify rules, and act transparently
  - But none of these will be as effective as they should be without *more professionalized customs services*
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## How could the trade response be further enhanced? (2)

- Customs services should facilitate legal trade
  - Instead, they mostly use trade legalities to hinder open (legal) commercial trade and promote its informalization
  - They could equally use any “new legalities” for the same purpose!
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## Strategic Grain Reserves

- Played no role in the successful 2002/03 crisis response
  - Can be extremely costly and disruptive to markets
  - In principle, small and well managed stock could provide “degrees of freedom” in responding to crises
  - But management record is not encouraging
  - ... and Early Warning really was early!
    - Let's make sure it stays that way
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## Wrapping up

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- Invest in sustainable local capacity for early warning, including market information
  - Learn how to quantify, forecast, and predict the future effects of vulnerability
    - Market proponents and the emergency response community need to work together
  - Introduce consumer response to relative prices into food balance sheets
  - Don't let SGRs divert you from the more fundamental challenges of making markets and early warning work
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