

## Food Balance and Food Security in Guinea-Bissau

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In 2009, Guinea Bissau was placed by the FAO in the group of countries in crisis requiring external assistance. Although the agriculture contribution to GDP is more than a half, this production is not enough for internal supply of rice. The value of rice imports represents 13% of the average imports since 2004 to 2007. This lack of rice production is assigned to the allocation of part of agricultural resources for the production of cashew nut that in 2007 was 89% of the country exports. However, making the comparison between cashew exports and imports of food products in 2006 and 2007, those exports are higher 31% the value of all imported foods, including rice.

The current account of Guinea-Bissau presented successive deficits during the last years that contributed to external debt. In 2009, it has reached a value of more than three and half times the value of GDP. However, the balance of food is the only positive balance within the balance of goods and services alleviating the external deficit.

This profile of food production and supply, however, raises the following issues: The inability to control the rice price determined by a concentrated international market; the dependence on few buyers of cashew nut whose price flees the control of local producers. About two thirds of Guinea-Bissau exports go to the world largest cashew exporter, India. Much more, it is not possible to predict the improving conditions through the enhancement of production by transforming cashew. It is not sure whether the process cannot be controlled by cashew buyer firms. The result would be some scarce wage gains and the risk of workers movement in agricultural production.

Despite these issues, there seems to be no direct link on food security and emigration. More consistent hypothesis may be the persistence of public and external deficit and its consequences on lack of State conditions for governance stability and human development.