

The impact of changing world resources on food security

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It is usual to think of resources as ones to do with people, fuel (energy) and minerals, food and water (1). Each of these is highly relevant to human food security. But information resources and intelligence, now increasingly a part of information technology (IT), and systems, especially ones of governance and culture, are also crucial (2). Bringing together these resources for food security in a way that is sustainable is the greatest challenge.

New and enhanced resources include those of population (especially older people), cultural fusion, information, renewable energy and biotechnology (3). Good governance is being both strengthened and weakened depending on location, information and education systems, burden of disease, and other factors. Gravely threatened are potable water supplies. Food transport may become precarious if jet-fuel dependent and local food production has diminished – yet it has played an important role in the diversification of the human diet. The decline in eco-systems and biodiversity may make food variety and what it offers food security more uncertain – generalised food variety has been a relatively recent human achievement through food cultural exchange, agricultural and horticultural development, food trade, and economic development; it may be short-lived.

Food and nutrition policy can no longer ignore its own impact on world resources and their sustainability.

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