

## Governance and Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa

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### Abstract

The global initiatives to reduce hunger are at the fore and center-stage in international fora such as the World Food Summit in 1996 and the UN Summit for the Declaration of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000. Despite all efforts to end hunger, many countries remain seriously challenged with undernourishment. Latest estimates reveal that Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest prevalence of undernourishment in the world. This paper analyzes food security (insecurity) using the lens of governance and institutions, without losing sight on the importance of the market indicators. Covering a sample of 27 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa for the period 2000–2013, an unbalanced panel analysis was employed to determine if the quality of governance and institutions (using the World Governance Index) helps explain country performance in promoting food security (using the Global Hunger Index) overtime. The empirical model estimation was done using pooled ordinary least squares, panel corrected standard errors, and panel instrumental variables techniques. Controlling for market variables, the empirical investigation finds strong evidence of a negative relationship between governance quality and food insecurity. The governance dimensions that significantly drive food security in Sub-Saharan Africa include voice and accountability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and rule of law. The study concludes that institutional policy reforms are of utmost importance if countries are committed to end hunger. Therefore, efforts, strategies, and resources for institutional reforms must be focused on the governance dimensions that are identified as critical drivers of food security or binding constraint in hunger reduction efforts in the region.