
NUTRITION MATTERS
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Dear WCAR colleagues;

In recent weeks The Economist has been following and supporting the Copenhagen Consensus project, an ambitious attempt to set priorities among a range of ideas for improving the lives of people living in developing countries. The organizing idea was: **How should an extra \$50 billion for development initiatives be spent?** Would it be possible to reach agreement on **what should be done first?**

Out of 39 proposals submitted, the panel ranked HIV/AIDS control, iron-deficiency anemia control, and malaria control as the top three given their ratio of social benefit to cost. In fact, by the ordinary standards of project appraisal, they were considered extraordinarily good as in the cost-benefit analysis their benefits exceed their costs by a factor of ten or more.

The panel of economists that reviewed the 39 proposals agreed that it would be a scandal that development proposals this good would fail to be adopted for lack of finance, especially when you reflect on some of the projects that governments are currently financing.

Four of the 12-top proposals related to policies and programs to attack hunger and malnutrition. These were: a) reducing the prevalence of iron-deficiency anemia; b) developing new agricultural technologies appropriate for developing countries; c) improving infant and child nutrition; and d) reducing the prevalence of low birth-weight.

We should be pleased that leading economic researchers are taking these things increasingly seriously. For background papers see www.copenhagenconsensus.com.

ENJOY! (... and share with your colleagues and counterparts).

Attached: a) Copenhagen Consensus. Putting the world to rights. The Economist print edition. June 2004. b) Copenhagen Consensus 2004: The Results. June 2004.

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