Overall, the Green Revolution was a major achievement for

many developing countries and gave them an unprecedented

level of national food security. It represented the successful

adaptation and transfer of the same scientific revolution in

agriculture that the industrial countries had already

appropriated for themselves. The Green Revolution also lifted

large numbers of poor people out of poverty and helped many

nonpoor people avoid the poverty and hunger they would have

experienced had the Green Revolution not occurred. The

largest benefits to the poor were mostly indirect, in the form

of lower food prices, increased migration opportunities, and

greater employment in the rural nonfarm economy. The direct

benefits to the poor through their own on-farm adoption,

greater agricultural employment, and empowerment have been

more mixed and depend heavily on local socioeconomic

conditions. In many cases inequalities between regions and

communities that adopted Green Revolution technologies and

those that did not also worsened. At the same time, the Green

Revolution had many negative environmental impacts that have

still to be adequately redressed.

Agricultural research remains a potent force for good in the

developing world and is the key to increasing yields further to

meet the continuing growth of food needs in developing countries.

This need is especially urgent in Sub-Saharan Africa, which

has yet to experience an agricultural revolution of its own. But

simply adding to the pile of food will not be enough. The indirect

benefits for the poor are likely to be weaker in the future

as globalization and trade make food prices less responsive to

local production and as agriculture becomes less important to

the livelihoods of the poor. Policymakers will need to target the

poor more precisely to ensure that poor people receive

greater direct benefits from new technologies. New technologies

will also need to be more environmentally sustainable. By

building on the strengths of the Green Revolution while seeking

to avoid its weaknesses, scientists and policymakers can

take significant steps toward achieving sustainable food security

for all the world’s people.