Structural Transformation and the Agro-food System
Challenges for South Africa

Structural transformation, growth and development in low income countries
Overseas Development Institute, 28 October 2013

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No answers…

Why we need structural transformation

The challenges for agro-food policy

Some modest interventions
‘Stalled Agrarian Transition’

Poverty is concentrated in a marginalized majority…

… an ‘underclass’ that is structurally marginalized, not socially mobile.

Seekings and Nattrass 2005
Structural Transformation: challenges for land, agriculture, rural development

1994: 60 000 white farmers farm more than 80% of agricultural land

Deregulation, market driven land reform, ‘cheap food’ policy have intensified inequality and marginalization

LSF + Supermarkets + Social grants have abated hunger – but at the expense of dietary quality

Economically unsustainable and politically unstable!
Transformation in which direction?
Supporting smallholders

Post-Polokwane, smallholder agriculture is a new priority

But why?

“… rekindling the class of black commercial farmers which was destroyed by the Natives Land Act of 1913”?

Supporting diverse livelihood portfolios?
Engaging with private governance of the South African Food system

The Southern Africa Food Lab

The Southern Africa Food Lab (SAFL) brings together diverse role-players with passion and influence in the regional food system in order to identify and pilot innovative means of enhancing long-term food security. Its origins lie in a multi-stakeholder workshop held in Johannesburg in February 2009, at which there was widespread agreement on the need for better collaboration within and between sectors on food security matters. This workshop led to the establishment of a steering group and the development of a proposal to implement a year-long “Change Lab” process, inspired by methodologies implemented in a range of similar initiatives, including the Sustainable Food Lab. Towards the end of 2009, funding was committed by GTZ, the German development aid agency, and Reo’s Partners were contracted to facilitate the process.
Outcomes

“It’s too early to tell”…