

HLPE Innovation for Sustainability and Productivity

Innovation will be key to achieving the aims of the Agenda 2030. In the face of a rapidly growing global population and the increasingly severe consequences of climate change, new approaches, techniques, and technologies will need to be developed to successfully combat hunger and malnutrition.

Achieving a world free from hunger and delivering on the promise of the SDGs will depend on our capacity to mobilize the innovative potential of all development actors. It will require an “all hands on deck” approach from every player, from small and medium-sized enterprises to global corporations, including aid agencies, governments, civil society and other important stakeholders. All stakeholders, public, private, NGO, and researchers, have an essential role to play in generating the innovative solutions that will be necessary to overcome the ever-evolving food security challenges that the world faces, and to ensure that food production remains sufficient to feed a growing population in a sustainable manner.

An HLPE report on this topic will help to clarify the challenges and successful approaches related to fostering agricultural research and development, enabling successful provision of extension services, and arming food producers and processors with the knowledge and tools they need to transform the agricultural sector to meet the changing needs of the world’s hungry. This includes the important communities of women and youth.

The need for innovation also extends to the realm of multi-stakeholder cooperation. Governments, businesses, NGOs, and academia will need to develop novel forms of partnerships and mutual support in order to guarantee the achievement of the aims of the Agenda 2030.

Contribution to the achievement of the SDGS

Innovation is important to achieve all the SDGs and is specifically called out in Goal 9 of the SDGs: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Targets under Goal 9 include:

- Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending
- Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States 18

- Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities

Further, Target 2.3 cites the need to increase agricultural productivity.

Relevance and global impact

If the world is to secure the increases in agricultural productivity required to produce enough food for the growing population, greater emphasis is needed on the role of agricultural research and the development of appropriate and adapted technologies to farmers, integration with traditional knowledge, and capacity-building.

It also addresses the specific challenges listed on the UN SDG website (<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/infrastructure-industrialization/>), including that: “Least developed countries have immense potential for industrialization in food and beverages (agro-industry), and textiles and garments, with good prospects for sustained employment generation and higher productivity”. As well as, “In developing countries, barely 30 per cent of agricultural production undergoes industrial processing. In high-income countries, 98 per cent is processed. This suggests that there are great opportunities for developing countries in agribusiness.”

CFS value added and contribution to CFS objectives

As a unique multi-stakeholder platform, the CFS is well-placed to encourage actors with an extremely broad range of expertise and competencies to adopt practices that encourage innovation which contributes to agricultural development and food security, as well as to foster novel and cross-sectoral partnerships leading to innovative developmental outcomes. An HLPE report on the theme of innovation for productivity and sustainability will help lay a solid basis for the elaboration of policies and recommendations to facilitate these outcomes.

No duplication

The Addis Ababa Agenda for Action on Financing for Development Identified the importance of innovation and science. It included calls for:

- Crafting policies that incentivize the creation of new technologies, that incentivize research and that support innovation in developing countries.
- Recognizing the importance of an enabling environment at all levels, including enabling regulatory and governance frameworks, in nurturing science, innovation, the dissemination of technologies, particularly to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises,
- Fostering industrial diversification and value added to commodities.

CFS has the opportunity to foster achievement of SDG Goal 9 and 2 as well as contributing the broader goals and the means to achieve the SDGs as outlined in the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action. It would be undertaking items specifically called for in the global agenda by member states.

Key Potential Outcomes

A CFS process and HLPE report could help to:

- a) Articulate the vital role of innovation in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and identify ways to foster innovation
- b) Identify means to increase research in agriculture, food, and nutrition and improve capacity to conduct research
- c) Policies and investments in rural advisory services and extension to increase uptake of technologies and their application in the field
- d) Promote innovation in all sectors of agriculture including cropping, livestock, fisheries, forestry, and horticulture
- e) Outline cross cutting role of innovation in sustainable agriculture to advance SDGs including those on climate change, water, biodiversity and energy