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HLPF 2017 Voluntary National Reviews

IAFN Position paper

At the 2016 HLPF, countries reported voluntarily on the achievements toward implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including how they have integrated the SDGs in national development plans and strategies, and the overarching challenges they faced in the process. It was inspirational to see the steps that countries are already taking to implement all 17 Goals, particularly in the areas of food security, nutrition, and sustainable agriculture.

Agriculture is the primary driver to abate hunger and reduce poverty, which is felt acutely in rural areas. Throughout history, agricultural prosperity has gone hand in hand with successful economies. And food security has a direct impact on national security – politically, socially and economically. Food security and nutrition also underpin achievement of health goals. Goal 2 inextricably links nutrition to agriculture, as well as to many other Goals related to health, land use, climate change, water, sanitation, education, employment, social protection, infrastructure, gender equality and resilience.

In outlining their national reviews, given the cross-cutting role of agriculture in national development, it is important that all volunteering countries present clear and concise reporting that ensures that food security, nutrition, poverty reduction, rural investment and sustainable agriculture are highlighted and receive the high level of attention that is commensurate with their impact on national security and sustainable development.

By providing reliable and disaggregated data, the National Voluntary Reviews can help all stakeholders plan new strategies and elaborate ever more effective means of pursuing a world free from hunger, underpinned by food security and proper nutrition. The Private Sector hopes there will be greater attention to and stronger discussions of agriculture, nutrition and food in the context of HLPF 2017. This is a critical time to ensure that all stakeholders are taking the first steps to leave no one behind and moreover, that no one is left hungry.

We would therefore encourage submissions that provide concrete information on the problems faced in pursuing and achieving food security, with a special focus on poverty in rural areas and on the most vulnerable, including women, youth, indigenous people, and the aging.

Specific opportunities for assessment in the Voluntary National Reviews include:

1) Agriculture as an engine for inclusive economic growth

- a. Agriculture constitutes the basis of the livelihoods of many of the most vulnerable populations and is the backbone of rural economies.
- b. Investing in initiatives that create jobs, stimulate trade and minimize barriers to markets, and generate increased income by enhancing food value chains,

including through the development of local and sustainable supply chains and services.

- c. Eradicating poverty and hunger are integrally linked to boosting food production, agricultural productivity and rural incomes.

2) Improved food security and food safety

- a. Food security is an indication not only of the numbers of the hungry, but also of long term development prospects.
- b. Advances in food security, including increased supply due to improvements in food safety and production, will therefore have relevant impacts on a much larger number of SDGs than simply Goal 2, including those related to ending poverty, bettering public health, and fostering economic growth.
- c. Data about challenges, solutions and collaborations to help reduce the harmful human and economic impacts of unsafe food.

3) Nutritional outcomes.

- a. All forms of malnutrition are equally important, the world faces a double burden of malnutrition that includes both undernutrition and overweight.
- b. Beyond adequate calories intake, proper nutrition has other dimensions that deserve attention, including micronutrients availability and healthy diets.
- c. Unhealthy diets and lifestyles are closely linked to the growing incidence of non-communicable diseases in both developed and developing countries.

4) Investment and financing.

- a. Public and private capital flows and development assistance to invest in farmers and agri-entrepreneurs – in particular women – to participate in agriculture, infrastructure, innovation, education, training, technical assistance, and mentoring to overcome barriers.
- b. Tools and capabilities to help farmers, households, and communities to prepare for, address, and recover from economic, environmental, and political shocks.
- c. Useful information, knowledge sharing, communications and outreach programs and policies across the supply chain from producers, with special focus on smallholder and women farmers, to consumers.

5) Land tenure and natural resources

- a. Land, healthy soils, water and plant genetic resources are key inputs into food production
- b. Wise management of scarce water through improved irrigation and storage technologies, combined with development of new drought-resistant crop varieties.
- c. Protect and improve access to natural resources through technologies and best practices that respect stewardship for future generations.

6) Innovation and technology

- a. Climate change challenges call for increased investment in research and development of new technologies.

- b. Whilst research is required to identify further suites of mitigation and adaptation practices applicable to specific production systems and environments, innovation and technology that can help farmers increase their production, improve their livelihoods and steward better their production resources is also essential.

In preparation for the 2017 HLPF session review, the business community stands ready to support Governments at local, national and international level, to fully use the potential of the Forum as the central follow-up and review platform. Private sector actors have already undertaken a large number of projects aimed at furthering the implementation of the SDGs, and have attempted to incorporate them into their operations. In addition, several large scale coordination initiatives have been developed, such as the Global Business Alliance for Agenda 2030, to ensure that these contributions remain as relevant and coherent as possible.

With regards to the achievement of the Agenda 2030 in its entirety, the Private Sector strongly believes that:

1) A full commitment to global partnership and cooperation is required to help in the full realization of the SDGs.

- a. As the foundation of the SDGs, all efforts to achieve the SDGs must be framed around, and must strive for the 5 Ps: people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships.
- b. Effective partnerships between government, the private sector, and civil society are particularly useful in addressing complex and interconnected challenges through the value chain, which cannot be successfully addressed by a single actor.
- c. Private sector contributions and partnerships have helped, and will continue to help embed nutrition-specific interventions, crop diversification and nutrition-sensitive innovations, policies and programs throughout food systems.

2) Successful implementation of Agenda 2030 will depend on the application of effective and appropriate indicators

- a. Indicators are an essential tool for tracking progress and identifying successful approaches towards achieving the SDGs.
- b. Indicators must reflect and simplify the complexity and multi-dimensionality of development issues, and be flexible enough to be operationalized in a variety of differing contexts. Some indicators (such as those for target 2.4) have not been resolved, and this process will require the careful and concerted effort of all stakeholders.
- c. All stakeholders have a role to play in monitoring the progress towards the achievement of the Agenda 2030. Business and civil society are often able to bridge eventual data gaps that may exist in government sources.

3) Integrated and inclusive approaches to fulfil the SDGs

- a. Synergistic solutions must be sought, recognising the interconnectedness of distinct environments and populations. For example, projects cannot focus on

rural issues without recognizing the impact they have on urban areas, or focus on producers at the expense consumers.

- b. Projects must include all voices, including those of women, youth, indigenous peoples and the elderly. In order to be successful, farmers and SMEs (small and medium enterprises) must be included in policies and programmes at every stage, from development to implementation.
- c. Crosscutting challenges require holistic solutions at the nexus of development issues that create positive impacts at several levels.

Our collective efforts will be more useful and more durable than what could be achieved alone. So let us continue to use this forum to work together towards our shared goals of a future free from hunger and malnutrition.