

HLPF 2020 - Ending hunger and achieving food security for all
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IAFN contribution

Key Messages

- 1) Hunger has been rising since 2015, and now supply chain disruptions make food security an even greater priority.
- 2) Rural development and investment are needed to achieve the SDGs since 80% of those living in multi-dimensional poverty are in rural areas.
- 3) Governments must keep agricultural supply chains functioning and food flowing to ensure the right to food.

1. **Which areas and socio-economic groups** are especially vulnerable to poor nutrition and food insecurity and what are ways to ensure that food systems transformations leave no one behind?

The SOFI report in 2019 indicates 820 million live in hunger, but a total of 2 billion are food-insecure through the year. A UNDP study shows that 80% of the people living in multi-dimensional poverty live in rural areas. Rural infrastructure and investment gets far too little attention. Fostering **rural resilience** and putting **farmers at the centre of rural development investments** can help. With more economic opportunity and connectivity to markets through functioning supply chains, we can empower **women**, attract **youth** to agriculture and improve the livelihoods of many of the world's most vulnerable.

2. **What fundamental changes are needed** to make our food systems an engine for inclusive growth and contribute to accelerating progress towards ending hunger and achieving food security for all in the Decade of Action?

More effort needs to be spent on the **resiliency of supply chains**. The pandemic demonstrated that interlinkages can help to accommodate these challenges. Currently development efforts do not adequately focus on supply chains, ensuring each link is well connected, able to work collaboratively, and can play its essential role to deliver food and livelihoods.

- a) **How could they be designed and implemented to generate synergies and strengthen existing ones with other Goals and Targets?**

Ensuring adequate and reliable access to diverse, affordable, safe, and nutritious diets is a key component for Goal 2, but is also relevant for many broader development aims. Nutrition can only be addressed through a **holistic food systems lens**. By definition, "system" means that no actor operates in a silo and everything is interconnected. **Multi-stakeholder dialogue** and cooperation is fundamental to shaping solutions that work.

- b) **What are some of the possible trade-offs from these changes and how can they be mitigated?**

Carbon sequestration, water filtration, biodiversity enhancement and recycling of nutrients are Ecosystem Services. These goods and services delivered from the land need to be monetized with enabling policies and investment programs that reward farmers, ranchers and foresters with **eco-system benefit payments and credits for sustainable conservation practices**. Grants and credits can target water and soil quality improvement.

3. How might COVID-19 facilitate or complicate the implementation of needed food systems changes?

Recently, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) chair Mr. Thanawat Tiensin [released a statement](#) and the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) also released an [impact report](#) of COVID-19 on Food Security and Nutrition.

a) Will it aggravate and/or reduce vulnerabilities?

Protracted crises have created public health crises and food security issues in countries such as Syria and Yemen, and now **locusts** are impacting food security in the Horn of Africa. These very areas will be harder hit by COVID. **School feeding programmes** that kept children fed are now largely postponed. Take-home rations, home delivery or financial compensation should also be considered for the most vulnerable children.

As important as COVID is globally, the lack of access to **safe food and water** kills millions each year. Global resources should respond to this crisis, while balancing the needs to address other food security crises affecting the world.

b) What are the changes in design and implementation of policies affecting food systems which are necessary to prevent and better deal with food security and nutrition impacts of infectious disease outbreaks and pandemics in the future?

Prohibit export bans on food and agricultural inputs and improve trade policies at global and national levels. It is crucial that governments recognize the importance of the entire food supply chain from agricultural inputs to food and food ingredients, feed, packaging and transportation. This is a year-round cycle driven by harvests and growing seasons.

Increase availability of **nutritional foods** through R&D, improved distribution, and integrated production strategies linking agriculture, nutrition and health goals. Encourage consumers to choose diets that offer a healthy nutritional balance as well as environmental efficiency.

c) What of the current immediate actions we are seeing will contribute to the long-term resilience of food systems?

Social protection services are essential for everyone. Many fiscal relief measures are geared to employees. It is important to ensure farmers, fishers, and small business owners are also covered by **social protection measures**.

Keeping food moving domestically and around the world enables food & nutrition security, and this could not be more important than now. All those working in food supply chains should be considered essential. Farmer workers, agricultural herders and farm labourers who frequently move across borders must continue harvesting, grazing and planting. Given their

contribution to food nutrition security globally, Governments should identify, protect and ensure these and other “**essential workers**” throughout the entire value chain are able to move and work.

Governments should consider prioritizing the **cold chain and shelf-life extension technologies**, thereby ensuring nutrient-rich perishable food products (e.g. fruits, vegetables, dairy, and meats) are not lost during labour shortages, border disruptions and large fluxes in demand. The role for shelf-stable and processed foods is also vital at these times.

4. **What knowledge and data gaps need to be filled for better analyzing current successes and failures in food systems and the trade-offs and synergies, across SDGs, in implementing food systems changes to fix these failures?**

A lack of access to sufficient education and skills **training in rural areas** leads to shortages of opportunities in rural areas. Agriculture is fundamentally a knowledge-based sector and more investment needs to be placed in **extension services** and **innovation**.

Resilience to disasters is key and measuring income impacts pre-post disasters is an important metric.

Advancements by business in **technology and precision agriculture** will aid in the adoption of sustainable production and consumption practices, the tracking of data and enablement of data driven decision-making, knowledge transfer and capacity building – all of which will contribute to the delivery of Agenda 2030.

5. **What partnerships and initiatives are needed to harness synergies and/or reduce trade-offs in food systems?**

A successful sustainable development agenda requires partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society. These inclusive partnerships built upon principles and values, a shared vision, and shared goals that place people and the planet at the centre, are needed at the global, regional, national and local level.

The criticality of partnerships has been gaining recognition in the context of development strategies and international policy-making. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular SDG 17, calls for a revitalized and enhanced global partnership, that brings together governments, civil society, the private sector, the UN system, and other actors, and mobilizes all available resources to achieve the SDG’s ambitious targets.

Effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships that **mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources**, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

- a) **What are the most critical interventions and partnerships needed over the next 2 years, 5 years, 10 years?**

Rural areas suffer from the largest proportion of poverty and rural women remain furthest behind on achieving the SDGs. **Agriculture has been receiving a shrinking proportion of development assistance, and this trend needs to be reversed.** The UN should be more proactive in fostering an environment for responsible agricultural investment.

Recruiting and retaining **youth in agriculture** should be a priority. Addressing this issue supports retention of populations in rural areas, improves the future of food production, and is only possible when access to services and the standard of living of farmers and agricultural workers is decent and comparable to that of other professions.

Among the interventions needed are:

- Access to **financial capital** which is an issue for all farmers, particularly for many women and young people in developing economies
- Access to **domestic markets** due to poor infrastructure and lack of cold chain logistics that compound food safety issues
- Access to **international markets** resulting from poor infrastructure, trade policy and protracted crisis
- Access to **digital and biological technologies** that can advance the transition to more sustainable food systems.

b) **Can these be scaled up or adjusted to fit other contexts?**

Scaling up agricultural projects is only possible when looking at the entire supply chain and ensuring farmers have all the tools they need to make a decent living. Ensuring proper land tenure, agronomic training, literacy, math skills, business training, access to markets, and finance are key areas.

Initiatives such as the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) programme take an integrated approach to food security and nutrition issues.

c) **How can private sector support investments for sustainable agriculture production and supply and reduce food insecurity?**

Private sector contributions and partnerships have helped, and will continue to help through **nutrition-specific interventions, crop diversification and innovation.** Responsible agricultural investment is needed and open markets and private enterprise are critical for development and are an important part of achieving food security goals.

It is important to support **entrepreneurship** and private enterprise including local small-and medium-sized enterprises, in addition to multinational companies. An important pathway to achieving food security is to enable smallholder farmers to break the subsistence cycle and become small scale entrepreneurs. Recognizing the contribution of farmers and their investment in food security, is important.

The primacy of food availability in the face of a growing population demands an increase in productive capacity in farming around the world and a reduction in pre- and post-harvest losses and food waste.