

## Private Sector Mechanism Position Paper

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### STRENGTHENING FOOD SYSTEMS TO IMPROVE NUTRITION OUTCOMES

The Private Sector Mechanism (PSM) to the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is committed to working with CFS stakeholders on the nutrition agenda. PSM wishes to highlight specific areas where collaboration with the private sector can help ensure food systems contribute to enhance the likelihood of ending poverty, hunger, and malnutrition by 2030 as stipulated by the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

#### Performance of Global Food Systems and International Call to Action

Sustainable and resilient food systems must provide consumers adequate and reliable access to diverse, affordable, safe, and nutritious diets. Each of these components is essential in its own right, but no single component is sufficient to overcome food insecurity.

Private sector contributions and multi-stakeholder approaches can help embed nutrition-specific interventions and nutrition-sensitive policies and programs throughout food systems - from production to consumption. Such approaches can help address the grim paradox that hunger and malnutrition persist despite abundant food supply in some parts of the world; despite innovations in growing, processing, and transporting food; and despite the ever-increasing expertise in producing safe and nutritious food.

The litmus test of global food systems will not be whether more food is produced for the already well fed, but whether critical deficiencies in food systems can be reshaped to eliminate poverty and sustainably provide vulnerable populations, with regular access to nutritious, affordable and safe food products. Until this goal is achieved, hunger and malnutrition will likely remain the number one global health and national security threat, killing more people every year than HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis combined.

The stunning impact of hunger and malnutrition has prompted a call to action, the Zero Hunger Challenge, by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and stakeholders have rallied to develop frameworks for action to end hunger by 2030. To transform food systems from field to fork will require analysis and improvements at every level of the supply chain. Implementing solutions to achieve zero hunger and address malnutrition will require efficient and effective collaborations and partnerships among all stakeholders: governments, research, civil society and the private sector to implement mutually-shared, purpose-driven goals and aspirations.

#### Business Role in Development and Food Systems

The importance of private sector participation in sustainable development policies and initiatives is recognized at the highest levels. Prior to the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon wrote: *“The Committee on World Food Security is unique. By bringing together positions and perspectives from all sectors in a coordinated process that is inclusive, international, and intergovernmental, your decisions can have a greater impact on food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture for everyone.”* Many others have expanded on these sentiments, including Save the Children’s Framework for the Future, which states: *“The private sector is a vital source of innovation, capital investment and partnership that can advance many of the development goals. There will be ample opportunity to harness the dynamism of the private sector through core business approaches to create jobs, products addressing critical needs and to grow local economies”*.

Public-private partnerships have played increasingly vital roles in leveraging unique resources to help reshape food systems, especially over the past decade. The evolution began in the early 2000's with the establishment of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) that emphasises the roles that business must play in food fortification; reform of the UN CFS to include business perspectives in the decision making process; creation of the SUN Business Network to support implementation of 60 Country Program Plans; and the productive leadership roles that business leaders played in major UN global platforms of the recent years to demonstrate commitments to responsibly implementing global food security, nutrition and safety initiatives within food systems. At a more granular level, businesses and entrepreneurs, large and small, in every corner of the world, continue to play a fundamental role in producing and delivering food, as well as investing in and growing local economies.

Taking forward this opportunity and responsibility, the PSM perspectives on the roles of business in development are founded on three principles:

- **Broad-based, sustainable economic growth while reducing inequalities must be the foundation for stimulating the elimination of poverty, hunger, and malnutrition by 2030;**
- **Business capabilities (research, innovation, production, distribution, food safety, etc.) spanning diverse sectors should help inform policy-making to strengthen food systems, including at the local level, and improve nutrition outcomes;**
- **The global community must think anew and act anew to redefine inclusive roles for all stakeholders, including the private sector, within the UN Agenda 2030, focused on implementation activities that improve nutrition outcomes.**

Specific opportunities to advance these principles through public-private partnership include:

- **Investment and financing:** Leverage private and public 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, including those preventing local farmers and entrepreneurs from connecting to regional and global value chains as well as those preventing informal value chains to be integrated into formal value chains.
- **Trade:** Harness global markets to facilitate and grow regional and global value chains, support development of sustainable supply chains, build local capability, and minimize unnecessary barriers to trade.
- **Better nutrition:** Innovate and re-formulate products to meet nutrition and cultural needs, preferences, and consumption patterns.
- **Food safety:** Share the private sector's unique capabilities, tools, expertise and innovations through multi-sector and multi-disciplinary partnerships and collaborations to help reduce the harmful human and economic impacts of unsafe food.
- **Resilience:** Develop tools and capabilities to help individuals, farmers, households, and communities prepare for, cope, and recover from economic, environmental, and political shocks.
- **Communication and education:** Facilitate the development of 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.
- **Policy, regulations and governance:** Promote the values of good governance and policy reforms that support sustainable and resilient food systems through local and regional institutions, and science-based regulations.
- **Poverty alleviation:** Stimulate initiatives that create jobs, stimulate trade and generate increased income by enhancing food value chains, including through the development of local and sustainable supply chains and services.
- **Natural resources and environment:** Protect and improve access to natural resources through technologies and best practices that respect stewardship for future generations.

## Private sector contributions to global food systems

The private sector is a fundamental element of food systems and can partner to improve nutrition outcomes in scores of ways. The section that follows illustrates a few of the many business collaborations between the public and private sectors that can benefit all forms and sources of food—agriculture crops, livestock, fisheries, seafood, forestry, fresh, processed—through global, national, regional, and local food value chains.

### 1. Producers, input suppliers and investors:

- Increase food available for consumption and trade by leveraging production systems to yield more diversified and nutritious foods sustainably; thus, contributing to meeting food production target increase of 70-100% by 2050;
- Apply, adapt, and co-create new R&D, for example, to continuously improve the sustainability of farming practices while increasing yields, decrease post-harvest loss, increase the nutritional quality (with evidence-based bio-availability) and diversity of foods, and develop innovative sourcing processes, farming and food products;
- Apply and improve good agricultural and food processing practices and resource management techniques, including decreasing the incidence of food-borne illness;
- Provide employment opportunities, technical support, training, access to factors of production technological innovations, and access to finance, particularly for women and smallholders.

### 2. Processors, manufacturers, and packagers:

- Add value by transforming raw food commodities into nutritious (fortified, where appropriate), convenient, safe, affordable, and palatable food for consumers across the life course;
- Take into account the special nutrition needs of women of childbearing age, infants and children, and the elderly, including innovative products to address all forms of malnutrition (under and over consumption);
- Support special needs of food assistance programs and conditions for countries/regions protracted crisis;
- Practice sustainable sourcing by diversifying suppliers and enhancing social, economic, and environmental protections in supply chains.
- Facilitate reduction of food waste by consumers.

### 3. Distributors, Traders, and Retailers:

- Identify policy, institutional, and regulatory barriers and obstacles that inhibit trade and reduce the ability of markets to adapt to constraints (e.g., seasonality of food supply, surplus/scarcity regions and post-harvest loss);
- Improve and sustain transportation, processing, preservation, and storage techniques to maximize nutritional value, shelf-life and food safety;
- Communicate information to both suppliers and consumers, including nutritional content, good farm practices, safe food handling, and dietary planning.

### 4. Marketers and purchasers:

- Demonstrate how to scale up nutrition-sensitive initiatives that provide households with access to skills development, training and educational resources (such as access to health care facilities, breast feeding, and hand washing);

- Collaborate with local marketers to reach vulnerable populations with nutritious foods and price information;
- Promote food products for their nutrition values and their impacts on local communities;
- Incorporate nutrition promotion and education around food and sustainable food systems that builds on existing local knowledge, attitudes and practices.