**SDG 2: ZERO HUNGER**

**UN Sustainable Development Goal 2**: “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”. (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg2>)

Goal 2 seeks sustainable solutions to end hunger in all its forms by 2030 and to achieve food security. The aim is to ensure that everyone everywhere has enough good-quality food to lead a healthy life. Achieving this Goal will require better access to food and the widespread promotion of sustainable agriculture. This entails improving the productivity and incomes of small-scale farmers by promoting equal access to land, technology and markets, sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices. It also requires increased investments through international cooperation to bolster the productive capacity of agriculture in developing countries.

*Despite progress, more than 790 million people worldwide still suffer from hunger*: The fight against hunger has seen some progress over the past 15 years. Globally, the proportion of undernourished people declined from 15 per cent in 2000-2002 to 11 per cent in 2014-2016. However, more than 790 million people still lack regular access to adequate food. If current trends continue, the zero hunger target will be largely missed by 2030. The persistence of hunger is no longer a matter of food availability. Rather, in many countries that failed to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) hunger target, natural and human-induced disasters or political instability have resulted in food insecurity affecting large swathes of the population. Preliminary estimates from the Food Insecurity Experience Scale—available for about 150 countries in 2014 and 2015—reveal that food insecurity is most prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa. More than half of the adult population in that region faced moderate or severe levels of food insecurity, and one-quarter faced severe levels. Southern Asia had the second highest prevalence: around 25 per cent of adults there experienced moderate or severe food insecurity, and 12 per cent experienced severe levels.

#### *Chronic undernutrition, or stunted growth, still affects one in four children under age 5*: In 2014, an estimated 158.6 million children under age 5 were affected by stunting, a chronic form of undernutrition defined as inadequate height for age. Chronic undernutrition puts children at greater risk of dying from common infections, increases the frequency and severity of infections, and contributes to delayed recovery. It is also associated with impaired cognitive ability and reduced school and work performance. Globally, the proportion of stunted children has fallen in all regions except Oceania. Southern Asia made the most progress between 2000 and 2014, but the region is still home to the largest number of stunted children in the world — 63.9 million. In sub-­Saharan Africa, population growth outpaced progress: the number of stunted children increased from an estimated 50.1 million in 2000 to 57.3 million in 2014. Together, Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa accounted for three quarters of children under 5 affected by stunting in 2014.

#### *The number of overweight children under age 5 has increased to 41 million*: Worldwide, the proportion of children under age 5 who are overweight increased from 5 per cent in 2000 to 6 per cent in 2014. Overweight is a growing problem affecting nearly every region. Northern Africa has the highest prevalence of overweight children under 5 (16 per cent), followed by the Caucasus and Central Asia (12 per cent). Globally, 41 million children in this age group are overweight; almost half of them live in Asia and one quarter live in Africa.

#### *Agriculture’s share of government expenditures increasingly lags behind its economic contribution:* The productive capacity of agriculture depends on investments from public and private, domestic and foreign sources. Recent trends in government spending have not been favourable. The agriculture orientation index (AOI) — the agriculture share of government expenditures divided by the agriculture share of GDP —fell from 0.37 to 0.33 between 2001 and 2013 in developing countries. The decline was interrupted only during the food price crisis of 2006 to 2008, when governments boosted agricultural spending. Since the late 1990s, aid to agriculture in developing countries has languished at around 8 per cent of the total, down from a high of 20 per cent in the mid-1980s, when donors began focusing more on improving governance, building social capital and bolstering fragile States.

#### (from the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs / Statistics division)

Targets of SDG 2

2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round

2.2 By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons

2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment

2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality

2.5 By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed

2.A Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries

2.B Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round

2.C Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility

#### For progress reports and indicators refer to: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg2>

**DIMENSIONS OF HUNGER**

Summary findings of the **Global Hunger Index 2017** (<http://www.globalhungerindex.org/>) of the International Food Policy Research Institute IFPRI. To capture the multidimensional nature of hunger, the scores are based on four indicators: Undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting, child mortality[[1]](#footnote-1).

**INEQUALITY, HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION: POWER MATTERS**

by Naomi Hossain, Institute of Development Studies)

It is the people and groups with the least social, economic, or political power who suffer most from hunger or malnutrition. Thus any approach to tackling hunger should first examine how power works in the food system. Policies that fail to do so—no matter how practical, technical, or scalable—are unlikely to succeed.

How do inequalities of power lead to unequal nourishment? In food systems, power is exercised in a variety of ways and spaces by a variety of actors: through concentrations of capital and market share that allow agrifood corporations to influence food prices and agricultural inputs; by government bodies, international organizations, or public-private partnerships that can influence, implement, or block food policies and shape debates; and even through individual decision making about household expenditures and family meals.

**Interweaving Inequalities**

Inequality takes many forms—as people can be disadvantaged due to gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other factors—and understanding how it leads to or exacerbates hunger is not always straightforward. Gender inequality is one widely recognized axis of nutritional inequality. Many forms of chronic malnutrition are closely associated with low birthweight and child and infant nutrition status, which are linked to women’s lack of power in the household and society. Socioeconomic class and geography intersect with, and often surpass, gender as an axis of inequality. Yet another is ethnicity, illustrated by the poor nutrition outcomes—low weight-for- height (wasting), low height-for-age (stunting), and micronutrient deficiencies—among indigenous peoples, who often face both poverty and sociopolitical marginalization. Finally, people’s access to changing food markets also shapes hunger and nutrition inequalities. In urban settings, marginalized people often find themselves stuck in “food deserts” or unable to afford healthy foods even when they are available.

**Understanding Power**

Power is exercised in a range of forms (from consumption to advertising to policy making), at various levels (global, national, and local), in multiple spaces (from farmers’ unions to UN committees), offering myriad opportunities for campaigners, activists, practitioners, and policy makers to advocate, devise strategies, and build coalitions for change. Analyzing the role power plays in creating nutritional inequalities can help policy makers identify areas for action and possible allies as they formulate realistic nutrition policies and interventions.

**Leaving No One Behind**

Achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals’ aim of “leaving no one behind” demands approaches to hunger and malnutrition that are both more sensitive to their uneven distribution and more attuned to the power inequalities that intensify the effects of poverty and marginalization on malnutrition. To that end, power analysis can be used to name all forms of power that keep people hungry and malnourished; to design interventions strategically focused on where power is exerted; and to empower the hungry and malnourished to challenge and resist loss of control over the food they eat

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Although enough food is produced globally to feed the world, hunger persists—largely the product of various and severe inequalities. Yet neither hunger nor inequality is inevitable; both are rooted in uneven power relations that often are perpetuated and exacerbated by laws, policies, attitudes, and practices. The following recommendations aim at redressing such power imbalances in order to alleviate hunger among the most vulnerable:

**Foster Democratic Governance of National Food Systems**

To foster genuinely democratic governance of our food system, governments must actively include in the policy-making process underrepresented groups, such as small-scale farmers, that are involved in producing food and feeding people but often excluded from contributing to the policies and laws that affect their livelihoods.

**Broaden Participation in International Food-Policy Debates**

International bodies aiming to increase food and nutrition security must ensure the meaningful participation of people’s movements and civil society organizations from all parts of the world to generate more productive debates around paradigms of food systems.

**Guarantee Rights and Space for Civil Society**

Governments must ensure space for civil society to play its role in holding decision makers to account on their obligation to protect and ensure the human right to adequate food. Integral to this is freedom of assembly and association, including peaceful protest, and the right to information.

**Protect Citizens and Ensure Standards in Business and Trade**

Governments should create and enforce regulatory frameworks to safeguard citizens—especially the most vulnerable—from the negative impacts of international trade and agriculture agreements and the actions of private firms that could endanger citizens’ food sovereignty and food and nutrition security. Private companies should act in compliance with internationally agreed human rights and environmental standards in their business activities, as described in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

**Analyze Power to Make Better Policies**

National policies should take into account how hunger and malnutrition are distributed across the population, and how power inequalities affect different groups in society—for example, how discriminatory gender norms and practices can harm the nutritional status of women and girls. Focusing on trade, land, agricultural, and other policies that have both visible and hidden impacts on food and nutrition security will help to align efforts in the fight against global hunger.

**Increase Support for Small-Scale Food Producers**

Governments should build the capacity of small-scale producers, particularly women, by ensuring access to public services such as infrastructure, financial services, information, and training.

**Advance Equality through Education and Social Safety Nets**

To reduce gross inequality and hunger, national governments must provide access to education and create social safety nets to ensure that all members of society—including the most vulnerable and marginalized—have income security and can access essential health care.

**Hold Governments Accountable with Timely Data**

To monitor progress toward Zero Hunger and hold governments accountable to their commitments, critical data gaps in relation to both hunger and inequality must be addressed, and national governments and international organizations must support the collection of disaggregated, independent, open, reliable, and timely data.

**Invest in the SDGs and Those Left Behind**

Donors should adequately fund efforts to achieve the SDGs. This is particularly crucial for low-income countries, where official development assistance (ODA) is disproportionately necessary. Donors should meet internationally agreed targets by contributing 0.7 percent of gross national income (GNI) to ODA as well as 0.15–0.2 percent of GNI to the Least-Developed Countries.

**Link between hunger & poverty**

IFHE is participant in the **UN Zero Hunger Challenge** (<https://www.un.org/zerohunger/>) which follows the vision of a world free from hunger, malnutrition and rural poverty, achieved through an integrated approach and the transformation of food systems. The five elements of the ZHC are aligned with the 2030 Agenda and will deliver on various goals of the Agenda 2030, including Goal No. 1 “End Poverty” (elements 2, 4 and 5)



***1 - All Food Systems are Sustainable: From Production to Consumption***

Sustainable food systems deliver food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised. The effects of climate change will require sustainable and climate-compatible agriculture practices, including through diversifying production.

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***2 - An End to Rural Poverty: Double Small-scale Producer Incomes & Productivity***

Ending rural poverty will require a determined effort to increase the income of the small-scale producers. Small-scale producers also hold the key to sustainably feeding a growing global population. This will involve improving people’s wellbeing through sustainable livelihoods: increasing smallholders’ income and productivity and decent rural employment.



***3 - Adapt All Food Systems to Eliminate Loss or Waste of Food***

Minimizing food losses during production, storage and transport, and waste of food by retailers and consumers; empowering consumer choice; commitments by producers, retailers and consumers within all nations.

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***4 - Access Adequate Food and Healthy Diets, for all People, all Year Round***

Addressing poverty and inequality and building peoples’ resilience to shocks and stresses. Access to food that forms the basis of healthy and diverse diets is intricately linked to both rights – particularly equity and women’s rights – and resilience.

***5 - An End to Malnutrition in all its forms***

Malnutrition is both a driver and an outcome of poverty and inequality. Undernutrition can also lead to hidden hunger, wasting and stunting, which causes irreversible damage to both individuals and society. Obesity in childhood is a growing problem in all regions. Ensuring universal access to nutritious food in the 1000-day window of opportunity between the start of pregnancy and a child’s second birthday is essential to tackling stunting. This should be supported by a multi-sectoral approach which includes nutrition-sensitive health care, water, sanitation, education, agriculture, social protection and specific nutrition interventions, coupled with initiatives that enable empowerment of women.

1. Indicators: Undernourishment (share of the population that is undernourished, reflecting insufficient caloric intake); child wasting (share of children under the age of five who are wasted/low weight-for-height, reflecting acute undernutrition); child stunting (share of children under the age of five who are stunted/low height-for-age, reflecting chronic undernutrition; child mortality (mortality rate of children under the age of five). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)