



# **A Global Plan to End Food Crises and Transform Food Systems**

## Background

In 2015, SDG2, the global goal to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition, improve the livelihoods of small-scale food producers, and promote agricultural sustainability was adopted as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This reflected the optimism at the time about the possibility of a world without hunger by 2030. However, since 2017, the United Nations' State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) Reports have documented an uptick in food insecurity. They point to several key drivers—conflict, climate change, economic shocks, and persistent poverty and inequality. COVID and its impacts on health, livelihoods and trade, as well as the impact of the war in Ukraine on food, fuel, and fertiliser prices, have compounded this devastating trend. The situation is stark:

- Up to 783 million people go hungry- more than the population of the EU and US combined (SOFI 2023)
- An additional 120 million people were food insecure in 2022 compared to 2019 (SOFI 2023)
- Acute malnutrition in pregnant and breastfeeding adolescent girls and women has increased by 25% - from 5.5 million to 6.9 million since 2022. 45 million children under five are affected by wasting (UNICEF 2023)
- An unprecedented quarter of a billion people faced acute food insecurity in 2022 (2023 Global Report on Food Crises)

The world is now significantly off track to achieve SDG2 by 2030.

There is urgency to save lives NOW, and - with less than 6 years left to achieve the SDGs and to stay within the 1.5 degree climate target set out in the Paris Agreement - to build resilience and to transform food systems to secure the future.

With a concerted push and joined up efforts, it is entirely feasible to prevent continued backsliding on hunger and malnutrition in all regions, scale up priority interventions targeting populations most vulnerable and being left behind, and accelerate progress.

### **What is Needed Now:**

Action in three areas:

- Scale-up evidence-based interventions to improve nutrition and transform food systems
- Invest in smallholder agriculture
- Strengthen and leverage existing platforms, including social protection, school meals programs, and support for farmers' organizations

### **A global plan to mobilize:**

- Leadership
- Coordination
- Financing
- Accountability and Transparency

There are many laudable initiatives and processes that address different aspects of the food crisis and SDG2. They have helped unlock progress, but the world needs to go further, faster with a truly holistic and joined up approach to break the cycle of food crises, transform food systems and put the world back on track to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition. The absence of a clearly articulated, aligned policy consensus across a wide range of stakeholders contributes to a sense of competing priorities. We are simply not getting the collective impact we expect from the work that is being done.

A global plan with high level political leadership, which sets out a prioritized set of actions that scale up what we know works, defines roles and responsibilities, and is matched with adequate financing and a robust accountability mechanism would help unlock the momentum we need. This is not about creating something new. Rather, the purpose of the global plan is to:

- Demonstrate political leadership
- Align key actors, initiatives, stakeholders, financing, and technical support around evidence-base priority actions
- Increase global coordination to support country level action
- Improve global governance and accountability

## WORLD FOOD PRIZE LAUREATES BACK GLOBAL PLAN

In March 2024, 27 World Food Prize Laureates joined forces to call on G20 leaders to support a global plan underpinned by evidence and finances to steer the world back towards ending hunger. They also urged leaders to get behind President Lula's efforts to put tackling hunger and poverty at the heart of Brazil's G20 presidency.



“As World Food Prize Laureates who have dedicated decades of our careers to ending hunger, we ask the leaders of the G20 to help secure an updated global plan, backed by evidence and sustained investment, to get the world back on track toward the end of hunger.”

## The Opportunity Ahead:

It will take high level leadership at many levels—from national governments in donor and developing countries, from UN agencies and the Multilateral Development Banks, and from civil society and the private sector—to get widespread agreement on a global plan. We need political champions and a set of countries and organizations leading the way to set a vision and provide political energy.

The next 2-3 years offer key opportunities to secure this coordinated action and vision including through key global and regional processes. Landing a commitment this year to develop a global plan spanning the period from 2025-2030 could help supercharge the effort we need in the sprint to 2030.

2024 Key Moments:

- The Post-Malabo process promises to deliver the African plan that should inform the global plan. This would ensure efforts are aligned to support some of the countries most affected by the food and climate crises, build resilience and accelerate progress.
- G7: Italy holds once again the G7 presidency. This takes place on the 15 year anniversary of the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI), launched at the 2009 G8 Summit in Italy in response to the 2007/2008 global food price crisis. G8 countries and several other countries committed \$20 billion over three years as part of AFSI to focus on food security and nutrition, agriculture, and climate mitigation and adaptation, guided by the Comprehensive Framework for Action. This was, effectively, a global plan developed by the UN High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. In 2024, the newly announced Puglia Initiative on Food Systems can build on this legacy and contribute momentum towards developing an updated global plan. The G7 Leaders Summit will be held in Borgo Egnazia, in Apulia, from 13-15 June.
- High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF): will be held from 8-17 July.

The theme will be "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions". The HLPF will review in-depth SDGs 1 (poverty), 2 (hunger), 13 (climate) 16 (peace and justice) and 17 (partnerships offering the chance to review at a national level progress and challenges on the Goals most linked to the food crisis.)

- G20: In 2024, as part of Brazil's presidency of the G20, President Lula has committed to launch a Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty. This presents a critical opportunity to galvanize consensus around such a plan. It comes 15 years since the G20 last took coordinated action to address a food crisis—the 2007/2008 global food price crisis—when they established the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program as the coordinating, implementing and financing mechanism for the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative. The G20 Leaders Summit will take place from 18 - 19 November.

“It is unacceptable that a world capable of generating wealth in the order of 100 trillion dollars per year still harbors the hunger of more than 735 million people. We are creating the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty so as to promote a set of public policies and mobilize resources to finance them.

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

- COP29: At COP 28, 159 leaders signed the UAE Leaders Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action. It underscored the urgency of addressing food security and nutrition, and improving livelihoods of small-scale food producers in light of the climate crisis and the important role that food systems can play in mitigating climate change. COP29 will be hosted in Baku, Azerbaijan from 11 -22 November. At COP29, countries will report back on progress and build momentum into COP 30 in Brazil in 2025.

- The Biodiversity COP 16, the High Level Political Forum in July, the Summit of the Future at the UN General Assembly and the Scaling Up Nutrition Global Gathering will also be important moments to align priorities for action across sectors and stakeholders.
- Elections: with more than half the world going to the polls, there is also an opportunity to galvanize new and renewed leadership around a collective effort to tackle the food crises.

### 2025 and beyond:

- Nutrition for Growth Summit: France will host the Summit in March 2025. It will be a key moment for all nutrition stakeholders to make nutrition policy and financial pledges. It comes at the end of the UN Decade on Nutrition without achieving the 2025 WHA Nutrition Targets, which are also the SDG2.2 targets. It will be an opportunity to extend the targets and redouble efforts.
- Canada's leadership of the G7 and South Africa's presidency of the G20 in 2025, and the US in 2026, offer the potential for sustained leadership on a global plan across several presidencies
- COP30 Brazil: President Lula has already connected Brazil's COP30 presidency with its G20 presidency.

## The Global Plan in detail: proposed outcomes and focus areas

Global plans exist in other sectors and have successfully helped coordinate action across stakeholders. Some examples include the [One Health Joint Plan of Action](#) and the [Every Newborn Action Plan](#).

A global plan would be developed in consultation with key stakeholders, especially countries and communities most affected by hunger and poverty. It would not be prescriptive and would need to be contextualized for national level implementation. Key elements it must address:

### Establish Outcomes and Priority Actions to:

#### Save lives

- Immediate action to protect food security and nutrition outcomes and livelihoods
- Prevent backsliding by operationalizing the country-led [Food Security Crisis Preparedness Plans](#)
- Address climate-related loss and damage
- Establish anticipatory, shock responsive systems



#### Build Resilience

- Social Protection
- Support for smallholder farmers
- Improve access to healthy diets



#### Secure the Future

- Transform food systems so that they are resilient, sustainable, equitable, and deliver healthy diets and unlock a stronger base for future economic development.
- Adapt to and mitigate climate change



- Take stock of the latest scaleable, evidence-based interventions
  - Identify a set of top priorities at global, regional, and national levels
  - Develop an approach to recognize and manage trade-offs
  - Map current actors, initiatives and coalitions
  - Identify opportunities for greater impact, including through actions with co-benefits
  - Establish a shared set of data, with transparent methodologies and assumptions, building on the [Global Food Security and Nutrition Dashboard](#) established by the Global Alliance for Food Security launched during the G7 Summit under Germany's presidency in 2022 or [the Food Systems Dashboard](#)
  - Highlight gaps that need filling, including research, data and financing gaps
  - Develop a financing plan-for more on financing see this [brief](#)
  - Establish a global governance structure and architecture to improve coordination, alignment and delivery at the country level
- Create an accountability framework building on the [Nutrition Accountability Framework](#) to track commitments

## Who would develop the global plan

There are several options for how this important process could be undertaken. With a relatively short time frame to 2030, it would be important to establish or build on an existing mechanism that would lead the process of developing a plan and also guide and monitor its implementation. The Brazil G20 Task Force on the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty is one option. It would need to have high level political backing to ensure success. Such a “High Ambition Coalition” would support and champion the effort. The following are examples of how this has been done in the past:

- The UN Secretary General convened the High Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis developed the 2008 Comprehensive Framework for Action
- The G20 under the Italian Presidency in 2021 set up the G20 Independent Panel for Review of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) Capital Adequacy Framework (CAF) to make recommendations on reform of the MDBs.

### Ready to Scale Interventions:

A strong body of evidence has emerged through modeling and research that provides the basis for building consensus around a set of priority areas for action to save lives, build resilience and secure the future which would form the basis of a global plan. This includes the small-scale food producer policy consensus which reflects priorities identified in consultations with smallholder farmers and Ceres2030; the UN Food Systems Summit and its national dialogues; costed food systems transformation plans in Ethiopia, Malawi, and Nigeria; the CFS Voluntary Guidelines; the Lancet Series on Nutrition (2008, 2013 and 2021) and the World Bank Investment Framework for Nutrition; reports of the High Level Panel of Experts and the State for Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) and many other reports and research; and commitments made through the Malabo Declaration and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), COP28, and the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit.

### To Boost Nutrition Outcomes:

Improving maternal and child nutrition is critical to child survival, cognitive and physical development, and long-term health and education outcomes and earning potential. Alongside continuous efforts to promote dietary diversity and access to safe, nutritious diets for all people in all places at all times, several Lancet Maternal and Child Nutrition Series have taken stock of the evidence and the following nutrition specific interventions have been found to be proven and cost effective:

- Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation for pregnant women
- Iron folate supplementation for adolescents and pre-pregnancy
- Promotion of Breastfeeding
- Appropriate complementary feeding including nutrient-rich foods and small-quantity lipid-based nutrient supplements.
- Vitamin A administration and preventive zinc supplementation in children aged 6–59 months
- Supplementary food in food-insecure settings
- Management of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) through ready to use therapeutic food (RUTF) and community-based approaches using locally sourced supplementary foods.
- Large-scale food fortification and biofortification
- Promotion of handwashing
- Strategies to prevent malaria during pregnancy

According to the Lancet, “Continued investment in nutrition-specific interventions and delivery strategies to reach poor segments of the population at greatest risk can make a substantial difference. If these ten proven nutrition-specific interventions were scaled-up from existing population coverage to 90%, an estimated 900000 lives could be saved in 34 high nutrition-burden countries (where 90% of the world’s stunted children live) and the prevalence of stunting could be reduced by 20% and that of severe wasting by 60%. This would reduce the number of children with stunted growth and development by 33 million. On top of existing trends, this improvement would comfortably reach the WHA targets for 2025.”

In addition, nutrition-sensitive interventions in health, early childhood development, education, agriculture, and social protection can increase the effectiveness of nutrition-specific interventions and support livelihoods, food security, diet quality, and women’s empowerment, and reach vulnerable households.

“Climate change has helped push 122 million people into hunger since 2019. Reversing this trend will not be possible if governments continue to tie the hands of millions of family farmers. Together we produce a third of the world’s food yet we receive a fraction of the climate finance we need to adapt.

Hakim Baliriane, Chair of the Eastern and Southern Africa small-scale Farmers Forum

### **To Lift Smallholder Farmers Out of Poverty:**

Small scale food producers are key to ensuring food security and nutrition. In Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, they produce a majority of the food that is consumed locally. Yet they are on the front lines of many interconnected challenges—climate, conflict, and high food prices, leaving them more likely to experience hunger and poverty and their children to face the life-threatening and long-term consequences of chronic malnutrition. Women, youth, and indigenous farmers, in particular, face further marginalization due to limited access to land, markets, finance, and extension services. Investing in smallholders can build their resilience and improve income and health outcomes, help diversify food production and diets, protect agrobiodiversity, maintain and improve soil health, and sustain local markets. Despite this, according to a recent report, just 0.3% of international climate finance goes to family farmers who produce a third of the world’s food. In 2020, the research collaborative Ceres2030,

using AI technology to analyze decades of research and evidence, identified 10 interventions to end hunger and improve smallholder farmers’ livelihoods by 2030. They are:

#### **Empower the Excluded**

- Enable participation in farmers’ organizations.
- Invest in vocational programs for rural youth that offer integrated training in multiple skills.
- Scale up social protection programs.

#### **Invest on the Farm**

- Investment in extension services, particularly for women, must accompany research and development (R&D) programs.
- Agricultural interventions to support sustainable practices must be economically viable for farmers.
- Support adoption of climate-resilient crops.
- Increase research on water-scarce regions to scale up effective farm-level interventions to assist small-scale producers.
- Improve the quantity and quality of livestock feed, especially for small and medium-scale commercial farms.

#### **Help Move Food to Markets & Consumers**

- Reduce post-harvest losses by expanding the focus of interventions beyond the storage of cereals, to include more links in the value chain, and more food crops.
- Invest in the infrastructure, regulations, services and technical assistance needed to support SMEs in the value chain.
- A new research project, Hesat2030, is compiling additional evidence that integrates climate, gender, and nutrition and will be released later this year.

### To Transform Food Systems:

- FAO's 2023 Report launched at COP 28, Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold: A global roadmap, Part 1, outline 10 priority domains (livestock, fisheries and aquaculture, crops, enabling healthy diets for all, forests and wetlands, soil and water, food loss and waste, clean energy, inclusive policies and data) and 120 actions across the domains.
- The Food Systems Dashboard identifies 42 policies and actions to orient food systems to deliver healthier diets and a further 45 to ensure environmental sustainability, many of them with co-benefits.
- The Alliance of Champions for Food Systems Transformation has aligned around specific recommendations in 10 priority intervention areas: increase affordability, improve livelihoods, enhance resilience, advance gender parity, protect and restore nature, scale up sustainable management practices, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce food loss and waste, accelerate innovation, and realign public financial and policy incentives.

### To Adapt to Climate Change:

There is growing consensus that incremental approaches are no longer sufficient. There is urgency to step up transformative approaches that protect and improve smallholder farmers' productivity and livelihoods, diversify crop production, anticipate and respond to the impact of climate change on nutrition, ensure water security, step up agriculture research, planning, and adaptation services, reform agricultural policies, and include affected communities, including women and marginalized groups, in decision-making. These actions would deliver a "triple dividend" of preventing losses, economic benefits, and social and environmental gains.

## Strengthen and Leverage Existing Platforms

### Social Protection:

Social Protection programs, including cash transfers in humanitarian and fragile settings, have proven effective in protecting and improving food security, nutrition, and livelihoods. They can be scaled during crises and leveraged to promote gender equality and anticipatory actions. Adaptive social protection programs help individuals and communities reduce the impact of climate shocks and build resilience to future shocks. They have also been found to foster greater social inclusion.

### School Meals:

Most countries have some sort of school meals program. While they vary in scope, scale, and targeting, they are very popular, serving an important education and food security function, and there is growing momentum with the launch of the School Meals Coalition at the UN Food Systems Summit. The benefits of school meals include keeping girls in school, especially adolescent girls, who face the risk of child marriage. They also provide a platform that can be leveraged to improve nutrition, including through take-home rations that can help younger children, shape lifelong eating habits to prevent overweight and obesity and by extension related non-communicable diseases. Procurement policies for school meals programs can prioritize purchasing food from small-scale, local farmers, helping to improve their livelihoods and reduce rural poverty, and encourage sustainable and equitable approaches. This was done successfully in Brazil and Ghana.



**Smallholder Farmer Organizations:**

According to Ceres2030, smallholder farmers who are members of farmer organizations and cooperatives are more resilient and have higher incomes. Farmers organizations offer an important platform to disseminate agriculture extension, nutrition education, new and contextualized research findings. They are an underutilized platform that could be used much more effectively and creatively.

**Conclusion**

Time is running out to get back on track to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030. The good news is that we know what to do and there are a lot of actors working on these issues. Harnessing and leveraging current efforts across stakeholders and sectors would increase collective impact. It is time for an updated global plan to end food crises and transform global food systems. One that sets priority actions, is backed by political leadership and champions, and would increase coordination, accountability and financing. The next two years, 2024 and 2025 offer critical opportunities to align efforts and resources to accelerate impact. This is especially urgent to countries and communities that are on the frontlines of the climate crisis and at risk of falling even further behind.