

# Reimagining Global Governance for Food Security







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**“ We have the ability to reshape the global food security system to alleviate hunger, end poverty, and promote sustainable development.**

Kofi Annan

# About the Report

## About the Commission

The **Kofi Annan Commission on Food Security** was established to address critical gaps in global food security governance. Comprising seven prominent leaders, the Commission aims to analyze current challenges, identify opportunities for governance improvements, and propose actionable pathways for reform, building on previous efforts within the multilateral system.

For more information, please visit [kofiannanfoundation.org/fixfoodgovernance](https://kofiannanfoundation.org/fixfoodgovernance)

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# Members of the Commission



CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION

**Elhadj As Sy**

Senegal

**Chair of the Kofi Annan Foundation Board, Former Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)**

Mr. Sy, former Secretary General of the IFRC (2014–2019), is co-Chair of the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board and Chair of the Kofi Annan Foundation Board. Previously, he served as UNICEF’s Director of Partnerships, Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, and Global Emergency Coordinator for the Horn of Africa. He has held leadership roles with UNDP, the Global Fund, and UNAIDS and directed health and development programs with Environment and Development Action in the Third World in Dakar. Mr. Sy holds degrees from the University of Dakar, University of Graz, the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna and a postgraduate diploma in Education from the Ecole normale supérieure in Dakar.



COMMISSIONER

**Sara Roversi**

Italy

**President, Future Food Institute**

Sara is a social entrepreneur and thought leader in the food ecosystem who works with globally recognized, high-profile think tanks on setting the agenda for the sustainable food industry. As founder of the Future Food Institute, she promotes food innovation to foster sustainable growth and addresses food security challenges through integral ecology and regeneration. Future Food’s “Living Labs” in Bologna, Tokyo, Pollica, and other global locations engage communities in transformative food practices. Sara manages Permanent Secretariat of the Italian Emblematic Communities of the Mediterranean Diet UNESCO, co-founded [goodaftercovid19.org](https://goodaftercovid19.org), presides the Scientific Committee of “Fondazione Italia Digitale”, and participates in other initiatives on food innovation for sustainability.

“ Establishing the perfect system to reach Zero Hunger is no easy task. If it were, it would have been done years ago. The Commission’s recommendations do not profess to offer perfect solutions, but with the commensurate goodwill and determined actions, they offer opportunities to get closer to that goal.

Amir Abdulla, Commissioner



COMMISSIONER

## His Excellency Hailemariam Dessalegn Boshe

Ethiopia

**Former Executive Prime Minister of Ethiopia and Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs**

H.E. Hailemariam Dessalegn Boshe served as Ethiopia’s Executive Prime Minister from 2012 to 2018, following roles as Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Affairs Minister, and Governor of the Southern Regional State. A civil engineer by training, he earned master’s degrees from Azusa Pacific University (USA) and from Tampere University (Finland) in water and environmental engineering. Known as Ethiopia’s first leader to step down voluntarily, he oversaw a decade of 10% annual economic growth and paved the way for reforms in sustainable peace and democracy. Post-office, he co-founded the Hailemariam & Roman Foundation and chairs organizations like AGRA, focusing on health, agriculture, and conservation.




COMMISSIONER

## Dr Soumya Swaminathan

India

**Chairperson of the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) and Former Chief Scientist, World Health Organisation (WHO)**

Soumya Swaminathan, former WHO Chief Scientist and Deputy Director-General for Programmes, became Chairperson of the MS Swaminathan Research Foundation in 2023. A renowned paediatrician and researcher on tuberculosis and HIV, she has 30 years of experience translating research into impactful programs. From 2009 to 2011, Soumya coordinated the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases in Geneva. As India’s Health Research Secretary and ICMR Director-General (2015–2017), she advanced evidence-based health policies and research capacity. Dr Swaminathan has over 480 peer-reviewed publications and holds fellowships with leading academies worldwide. A Board Member of CEPI, FIND, and others, she also played a pivotal role in WHO’s pandemic response and equitable vaccine distribution through COVAX.

Continue 



## Members of the Commission continued

“ Urgent action is needed. We call for a common commitment to overhaul food security governance and policy as an initial solution for its future.

H.E Hailemariam D. Boshe, Commissioner

“ The Kofi Annan Commission on Food Security calls for a bold rethinking of global food governance.

Sara Roversi, Commissioner



COMMISSIONER

**Amir Abdulla**

Sudan / United Kingdom

Former Deputy Executive Director,  
World Food Programme and Former UN  
Coordinator, Black Sea Grain Initiative

A dual Sudanese-UK national, Amir Abdulla joined the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in 1991, serving in roles such as Logistics Officer managing supply chains in emergency operations, Regional Director for multiple regions, and Chief Financial Officer, leading the first large scale adoption of IPSAS within the UN System. In 2009, he became Deputy Executive Director, leading field operations globally and overseeing WFP Regional Directors and Directors of Emergencies, Security and Gender. From 2015-2016, he enhanced WFP's engagement with the UN system and co-led UN development reforms. After retiring in 2022, Amir was appointed UN Coordinator for the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Amir is married with three grown children and three grandchildren.

“Increasing numbers of women and children are hungry and malnourished because of conflict, climate change, and rising costs of living. The Commission had the challenging task of proposing responses to these growing needs. We hope our suggestions will make a lasting difference.

Dr David Nabarro, Commissioner



COMMISSIONER

## Mariana Vasconcelos

Brazil

Co-Founder and CEO, Agrosmart

Mariana, daughter of farmers, is the co-Founder and CEO of Agrosmart, a World Economic Forum (WEF) Technology Pioneer, and serves on advisory boards for Thought For Food, ECO+ Foundation, and IICA. A passionate climate activist and digital agriculture expert, she was named one of Latin America’s most influential people by Bloomberg Línea. Championing gender equality, Mariana received Globant’s “Women That Build” award in the game-changer category. With degrees from UNIFEI, LSE, and Singularity University, she is a WEF Young Global Leader, a 50 Next honoree, and has earned accolades from MIT Technology Review, Forbes 30 Under 30 Brazil, and Fast Company’s 100 Most Creative in Business.



COMMISSIONER

## Dr David Nabarro

United Kingdom

Former co-Lead of the UN Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance and Strategic Director of 4SD Foundation

Dr David Nabarro is Strategic Director of 4SD Foundation, Professor of Global Health at Imperial College London, and WHO Special Envoy on Covid-19. Previously, he served as UN Coordinator for Avian and Pandemic Influenza (2005–2014), led the UN’s High-Level Task Force on the Food Security Crisis (2009-2014), and was Special Representative for Food Security and Nutrition and Coordinator of the SUN Movement (2010-2014). Early in his career, he worked on child health and nutrition in Iraq, South Asia, and East Africa, taught at the London and Liverpool Schools of Tropical Medicine, and held senior roles in UK development agencies. He was knighted in 2023 for his contributions to global health and food security, and received the World Food Prize in 2018.



# Executive Summary

Every day, 733 million people face hunger worldwide. Nearly one in ten people globally are undernourished, and almost a third experience moderate to severe food insecurity. These figures reveal a devastating truth: global systems are failing to deliver on food and nutrition security.

The United Nations' **Sustainable Development Goal 2** aims to “end global hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” by 2030. However, progress is so far off track that achieving this goal under current policies, programs and commitments appears impossible.

A radical transformation in how the international community addresses food and nutrition security is urgently needed. This transformation must focus on the shared responsibilities of governments, multilateral agencies, and the wider global governance on food security.

The **Kofi Annan Commission on Food Security** calls for a “common commitment” by these key actors to reimagine global governance institutions and strategies. This requires rethinking how multilateral

agencies and organizations collaborate and how government representatives – particularly from those nations who hold the most power – reach decisions.

This report outlines actionable recommendations for reforming the global governance architecture for food and nutrition in light of the challenges of today, including conflict, climate change, and post-pandemic financial pressures.

Based on a wide-ranging review of existing governance institutions, the **Commission** identifies four headline “governance shifts” that are required to revive the ambition of zero hunger and ensure that food and nutrition security are governed in the interests of all peoples. Ten primary recommendations, each with clear pathways for implementation, are presented under these headline shifts.



## GOVERNANCE SHIFT 1

# Reorienting Action on Agenda 2030

Accelerate Progress on SDG 2 by Enabling More Accountable and Informed Governance

Global commitments to end hunger have fallen short, exposing a critical gap between words and action. This gap has fueled a growing distrust between governments, their citizens, and the multilateral system. Governments and global food and nutrition actors must respond more effectively to the economic, social, and political barriers to food and nutrition security, and they must be held to account.

**1 Enhance the coherence and accountability of food security focused multilateral agencies and programs through a more streamlined and inclusive governance framework.** The multilateral system requires a more coherent overarching governance framework that can help national and international actors regain momentum on SDG 2 and the realization of food and nutrition security as a basic human right.

**2 Enhance food systems governance through more effective management of, and access to, relevant data.** Accelerating the push for zero hunger requires improved tools for measurement and more effective governance of the resulting data to inform and enable actors to make bold and decisive interventions.



## GOVERNANCE SHIFT 2

# Delivering on Prevention

Prevent the Slide into Hunger through Peacebuilding for Food Security and Social Protection

Attempts to secure food and nutrition for all are often based on either humanitarian aid or development interventions. While both have crucial roles to play, they fail to address the underlying drivers of food and nutrition insecurity. Early preventive action is a much more effective strategy, in terms of both costs and outcomes, than responding to in-country crises which have already descended into extreme distress. Yet, the multilateral system frequently delays comprehensive action that would prevent the slide into hunger. Two such actions in particular would help to address this:

**3 Build Peace for Food Security.** UN agencies and NGOs that are working to strengthen local governance structures for food security in conflict zones must be supported. Greater support for peacebuilding interventions by food security actors is required, along with a greater emphasis on food in peacebuilding mechanisms. Additionally, stronger voices are needed to address infringements on the right to food in conflict settings.

**4 Mainstream Social Protection for Food Security.** Social protection is central to achieving long lasting food and nutrition security, and both governments and international organizations must do more to address the full spectrum of food insecurity drivers. This requires both new and dedicated international mechanisms, such as the G20 Global Alliance on Ending Poverty and Hunger, and universally bolstering critical social protection interventions in areas such as mother and child nutrition.



### GOVERNANCE SHIFT 3

## Food as a Global Public Good

### Elevate Food Systems Sustainability as a Global Responsibility

Building a more sustainable global food system relies upon successfully integrating food and agriculture into other global governance agendas, particularly those concerning climate, finance, and trade. These areas have a significant impact on national capacities to deliver on food and nutrition security.

- 5 Fully integrate food systems into climate and nature governance agendas.** Governments must abide by existing commitments to align climate governance agendas with food systems transformations. This includes strengthening international coordination and directing greater volumes of climate finance to sustainable food and agriculture. This will not only be critical to reducing emissions, but also secure an adaptive food future which is informed by sustainable and regenerative technologies.
- 6 Provide a clear strategy for financing food systems as a global public good.** The Rome-based agencies are experiencing their most severe funding shortfalls in recent history, with over half of the required funding for tackling hunger going unmet. The global financial architecture must be reformed to align with the imperative to guarantee access to safe and nutritious food as a global public good. At the same time, food and agriculture specific investments and investment vehicles are needed to support food and nutrition security transformations in an era of climate change.
- 7 Governments to cooperate to ensure a more equitable food trade regime.** A free and functioning trade system is essential to ensuring food security for all. Governments must play a more responsible role in trade negotiations, including by relieving the pressure on WTO negotiations imposed by tariff and nontariff barriers and subsidies, and by working together to reduce unpredictability.



### GOVERNANCE SHIFT 4

## Shaping the Future

### Manage Future Food and Nutrition Needs through Anticipatory Approaches

The future of global food security will be defined by challenges related to persistent and multidimensional crises. Anticipating these challenges, and utilizing technological innovation to help solve them, will reduce pressure on food supply and foster a more efficient food and agriculture system.

- 8 Engage the private sector for more resilient and healthier food economies.** The private sector plays a crucial role in achieving the right to food and driving long-term food system resilience. Effective investment environments are critical to ensuring greater and more responsible private sector contributions to global food security, including in the areas of technological development and scale up.
- 9 Empower farmers to create sustainable food futures.** Farmers require support in adopting sustainable practices and contributing to long-term resilience. This support must include access to the right research, technology, and innovation while addressing the distinct needs of different types of farmers (e.g., smallholders or larger actors). This will equip them with the tools they need to contribute to sustainable markets and food systems.
- 10 Advance digital and innovative governance approaches to meet the needs of women and youth on an unequal planet.** Planetary transformations, such as urbanization and climate change, are placing greater pressure on the livelihoods of marginalized groups. Food security governance must prioritize the needs of these marginalized groups, especially women and young people, and empower them to be part of global solutions to food challenges.

# A Common Commitment to Freedom from Hunger



733m

people worldwide are facing hunger, with Africa and Asia being the hardest-hit regions. Women experience consistently higher levels of food insecurity than men.



29%

of the global population faced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2023.



12.8m

people are facing high levels of food insecurity in Sudan since the civil conflict.

# “Hunger has the face of a woman and the voice of a child.”

Brazilian President **Lula da Silva** during the G20 in 2024 at the launch of task force on hunger and poverty

## Sustainable Development Goal 2 aims to eradicate hunger by 2030, yet the world is moving in the opposite direction.

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, rates of hunger and malnutrition have increased dramatically. In 2023, 9 percent of the global population was undernourished and 29 percent faced moderate or severe food insecurity.<sup>1</sup>

Today, an estimated 733 million people worldwide are facing hunger, with Africa and Asia being the hardest-hit regions. Women, in particular, experience consistently higher levels of food insecurity than men.<sup>2</sup> Other critical food security targets, such as improving incomes for small-scale farmers and ensuring sustainable food production systems, are out of reach based on their current trajectory.<sup>3</sup>

### How is this possible, when more than enough nutritious food is produced each year to feed the world?

An important reason lies in the governance structures that seek to ensure peoples' food and nutrition security. The global governance system for food, distributed across the agencies, governments and specialized institutions which exist to ensure all people have access to safe and nutritious food, has developed in an ad hoc way over many years. Given the scale of recent crises and the changing ways in which international agendas are pursued, these structures require a comprehensive review focused on coherence and accountability.

Global governance exists to support national policies and mechanisms, particularly when the latter prove insufficient. But it can only do so when national governments cooperate effectively within its frameworks.

The lack of coordination and accountability present in food and nutrition security governance is worsened by geopolitical and economic tensions. People's ability to access safe and nutritious food is further compromised by direct political failures, with those living in fragile states and conflict zones impacted most severely.

The war in Ukraine has resulted in the greatest military-related increase in global food insecurity in the last century,<sup>4</sup> severely disrupting national and global food supplies. In Sudan, civil conflict since 2023 has left half the population of 25.6 million people facing high levels of food insecurity.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the Gaza Strip is at risk of famine amid ongoing war and severely restricted humanitarian aid.<sup>6</sup>

Extreme weather events such as the El Niño are also occurring more frequently across the globe, disrupting agricultural output and further compounding the pressures on outdated international frameworks and food security processes.

Many countries find themselves caught up in the effects of these and other intensifying crises. The governance solutions required to manage these crises are not currently in place. Debt continues to constrain the fiscal flexibility of lower-income countries, while world agricultural markets face restrictions such as barriers to trade in foodstuffs and agricultural technologies.<sup>7</sup>



**FOOD SECURITY MEANS THAT ALL PEOPLE, AT ALL TIMES, HAVE ACCESS TO SAFE, NUTRITIOUS, AFFORDABLE, AND SUFFICIENT FOOD.**

To achieve this requires a greater collective accountability – a “common commitment” on food and nutrition security – that can better address the structural determinants of hunger and malnutrition. This requires in turn a change in how and for whom food security is governed.

Previous initiatives and reforms have identified and sought to address some of the more specific challenges confronting the global governance of food. These include the UN Secretary General’s High Level Task Force on Global Food and Nutrition Security in 2008, reform of the **Committee on World Food Security (CFS)** in 2009, the introduction of SDG 2 itself, the **United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS)** in 2021, and the **UN Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance** in 2022. Despite these reforms, there has been limited success in turning the tide.

Building on these prior initiatives and incorporating the challenges of today, a fuller account of the entire food and nutrition governance system is required. Multilateral agencies and organizations, and the governments who direct them, require scrutiny – particularly those in the most powerful and influential nations.

“ Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

World Food Summit of 1996



## What this Commission Was Established To Do

The **Kofi Annan Commission on Food Security** (the “**Commission**”) was established to examine the global governance challenges undermining food and nutrition security and provide a clear and actionable series of governance reforms for reducing global hunger.

To do so, it has undertaken a large-scale review of existing data, evidence, and policy challenges. It has also consulted with key stakeholders over the course of nine months.

The **Commission** believes that achieving global food security – in line with environmental and equity commitments – is possible through stronger leadership and greater international cooperation.

Institutions matter, but states must do more to support their work in pursuit of more clearly defined mandates.

In presenting its findings and proposals, the **Commission** points both to reforms that are known, but where the political will to implement them has been lacking, and to new governance solutions that can ensure a more effectively managed food and nutrition security architecture.

In the spirit of **Kofi Annan’s** legacy, the **Commission** makes clear where responsibility lies for implementing the changes that are needed. It also underscores the importance of monitorable and measurable changes, and emphasizes the impact that structural drivers of inequality, such as gender, have on the global food system.

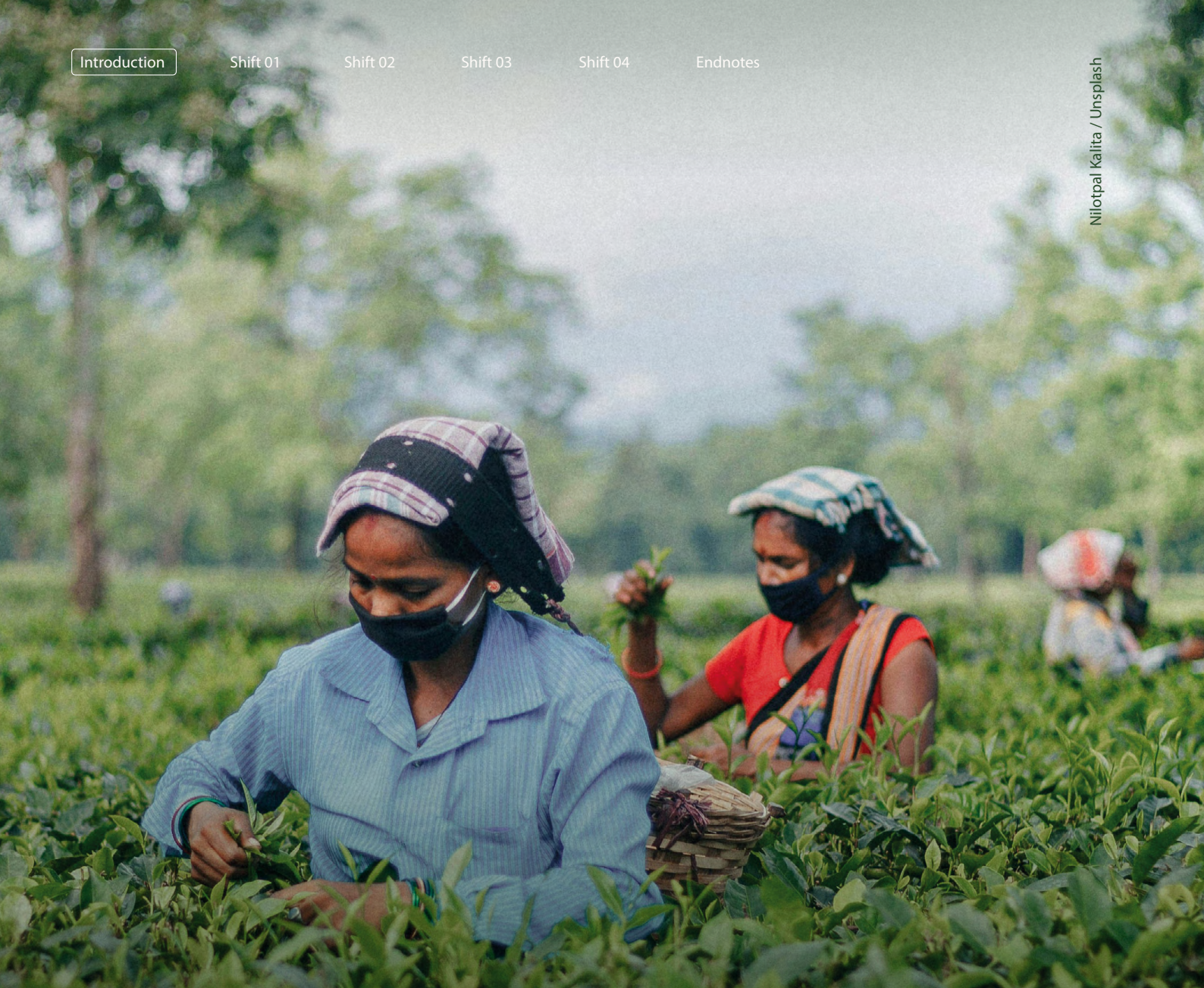
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## Three lenses have guided the work of the Commission.

**First** —————> Recognizing a loss of coherence and mission-orientation, the **Commission** has explored options for a coordinated series of **structural reforms**, which will impact the food governance system at large.

**Second** —————> The **Commission** has explored how more emphasis on **prevention and accountability** can restore year-on-year progress towards enhanced food security outcomes and a world free from hunger. Critical interventions – such as on nutrition – must not fall into the gaps between development and humanitarian programs.

**Third** —————> Recognizing that a range of **social and economic factors**, from poverty to inequality, create uneven burdens of hunger and malnutrition – particularly affecting women and children – equity is a guiding principle of governance.

A photograph showing several women working in a tea plantation. They are wearing face masks and head coverings, and are focused on picking tea leaves. The background is a lush green tea field under a clear sky.

**“ Simply put, people must be at the centre of everything we do. We can only achieve real impact through local action and empowered local actors. Our collective focus must be on addressing the needs, rights and aspirations of vulnerable people. A true and genuine partnership must be developed among the local and international actors where the leadership, knowledge and capacities of the communities, local organizations and authorities are genuinely respected and further empowered.**

Mr. Jagan Chapagain, Secretary-General,  
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## The State of Food and Nutrition Security Today

There are many crises confronting the world today. Why prioritize food and nutrition security? The answer is the scale, severity and persistence of the challenge and the fact that food and nutrition security are necessary building blocks for people to live healthy lives, to respond to other challenges, and contribute to a productive society. Yet present trends point to a growth, rather than decline, in undernourishment. Malnutrition in terms of undernutrition (wasting, stunting and being underweight); obesity (being overweight); micro-nutrient deficiencies; and diet-related noncommunicable diseases<sup>8</sup> is increasing globally. Despite an increase in global food production, an estimated **2.4 billion** people were moderately or severely food insecure in 2022. This includes more than one billion people in the world living with obesity.<sup>9</sup>

Based on current projections, **582 million** people will be chronically undernourished by 2030.<sup>10</sup> This assumes no further global setbacks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and increasing conflict. Ending hunger by 2030 has been estimated to require an additional **\$93b** in funding each year for the next five years, and this figure grows with each month of insufficient action. Exacerbating this challenge is the surging cost of nutritious food, combined with stagnated incomes, making a healthy diet out of reach for nearly **3 billion people**.<sup>11</sup> This rise in food prices is strongly linked to the growing prevalence of child stunting and underscores the urgency of comprehensive reform.<sup>12</sup>

When viewed in the context of these numbers, the sheer scale of global hunger and malnutrition becomes apparent. But the problem is also one of increasing complexity. Hunger and malnutrition remain concentrated in Africa and Southern Asia, but factors such as poverty, inequality, conflict, urbanization, gender inequality,

soaring food prices, and extreme weather are exacerbating these geographic disparities. In Africa, hunger has steadily worsened since 2015, with **58 percent** of the population moderately or severely food insecure in 2023, nearly double the global average.<sup>13</sup> It also has the largest proportion of undernourishment of any world region.<sup>14</sup> Central Africa has the highest prevalence of severe food insecurity in the world (**78 percent, or 157 million people**).<sup>15</sup> In conflict-ridden countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Sudan, and Ethiopia, war has been a major driver of acute food insecurity. Africa has the highest prevalence of food insecurity as a region, but the largest numbers of people who are food insecure live in Asia (**1.18 billion people**), the majority of which live in Southern Asia (**833 million**). In Asia, the recent rise in hunger has mirrored the sharp rise in food insecurity observed globally post COVID-19 pandemic.

**Food and nutrition insecurity is gendered**, with consistently higher rates among women than men, globally and in all regions. Gender inequality is transmitted in the form of systemic cultural biases against women and structural inequality in local and global food systems. This gender gap also widened during the COVID-19 pandemic in every region except Africa.<sup>16</sup>



# 1.18b

people in Asia are food insecure. The majority of those in turn live in Southern Asia.



# 582m

people will remain chronically undernourished in 2030.

# Freedom from Hunger: The Governance Transformations that are Needed

To achieve a world free from hunger, more effective global governance is needed, which complements the food systems evolution of recent years.

The Commission has identified four governance shifts where action should be prioritized. Together, these governance shifts, and their subsidiary recommendations, outline the necessary pathways to improving the institutional architecture and achieving SDG 2.



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GOVERNANCE SHIFT 01

## Reorienting Action on Agenda 2030



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GOVERNANCE SHIFT 02

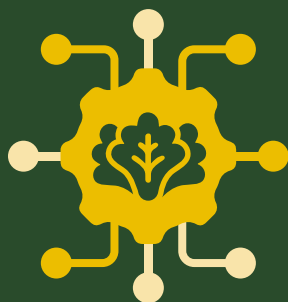
## Delivering on Prevention



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GOVERNANCE SHIFT 03

## Food as a Global Public Good



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GOVERNANCE SHIFT 04

## Shaping the Future



GOVERNANCE SHIFT 01

# Reorienting Action on Agenda 2030

Accelerate Progress on SDG 2 by Enabling  
More Accountable and Informed Governance







**“ Conflict, climate change, and poverty continue to drive millions of people into cycles of hunger. In today’s world, where there is more than enough food to feed everyone on the planet, it is a moral failure of our leaders and systems that we find ourselves in such a devastating situation. The Commission’s findings aim to provide actionable pathways to re-imagine and remedy the global architecture for food security to urgently achieve a hunger-free world.**

**Elhadj As Sy, Chair of the Commission**

**Global promises to end hunger have fallen short, exposing a critical gap between words and actions and leading to growing mistrust.**

Both governments and the multilateral system must do more to respond to the economic, social and political barriers to food and nutrition security, and they must be held accountable for doing so.

Adequate concessional financing is not being provided, for example by rich countries, while at the same time, many poorer countries are unable to provide adequate social protection nets for their citizens. In the face of these underlying challenges, action is siloed, and competition trumps collaboration among leading food system actors. Duplications during the implementation of mandates further exacerbates systemic inefficiencies and puts a strain on financing.

For example, the Rome-based agencies (FAO, WFP and IFAD, collectively referred to hereafter as the RBAs), have long sought to collaborate at multiple levels but struggle to do so in practice. These three pillar agencies of the food governance architecture have remained substantively the same for decades;

yet governance norms and expectations are changing. Multistakeholder forums and platforms are increasingly preferred in global decision-making, alongside traditional international and non-governmental agencies and organizations.<sup>17</sup>

The Commission’s first set of recommendations identify ways that food and nutrition actors can work together to respond to current and future challenges, and enhance their capacity to deliver on food and nutrition security. This will require more sharply delineated mandates and responsibilities, to better enable both individual agencies, and the government representatives who steer them, to fulfill their responsibilities.

Specific actions are proposed that will, firstly, build greater coherence, clarity, and accountability within the system and, secondly, provide more efficient and effective ways of ensuring year-on-year progress towards food and nutrition security for all. While recognizing the differences in governance structures, this must begin with a step change in RBA governance coordination, setting the tone for food security policymaking across the board.

# Recommendation 1

## ENHANCE COHERENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF FOOD SECURITY FOCUSED MULTILATERAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS THROUGH STREAMLINED AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

A joint commitment by governments to accelerate multilateral progress on SDG 2 is required to regain momentum on the realization of food and nutrition security as a basic right. The following sub recommendations identify a priority list of near-term measures, focused on clarifying and streamlining existing institutional mandates and ensuring their effective delivery at a system-wide level:

- **Establish a formal bi-annual joint meeting of a Food Governance Group, to ensure coherence in strategy of the primary food institutions and facilitate removing any unnecessary overlaps in their operations.** The Joint Meeting of the Food Governance Group could comprise representatives of the governing bodies of the RBAs, the World Bank, CGIAR, and UNICEF (see page 26) and would expand on and formalize the existing Informal Joint Meetings of the governing bodies of the RBAs. The Food Governance Group would focus on coordination, cooperation, and shared accountability among the primary multilateral food and nutrition agencies at the level of their governance, rather than secretariats.
- **Provide members of the governing bodies of these six organizations with independent board governance training at the start of their mandates,** ensuring that they are equipped to undertake their responsibilities, with full knowledge of key issues and shared strategic governance challenges.
- **UNICEF should be made responsible for mother and child nutritional programs,** based on a concerted mapping of support needs globally.

This would enable greater cross-agency clarification on where responsibility for first thousand days nutrition lies, and help to ensure the wider nutrition agenda does not fall through the cracks between food security and health governance. Mother and child nutrition is paramount to food security. Clear leading roles for food security and nutrition should therefore also be assigned at the global and national levels to relevant IOs and NGOs engaged on these issues.

- **Multilateral funding of agriculture-related projects and programs must be better coordinated.** IFAD, the World Bank and Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) all currently provide concessional finance for food and nutrition security, yet their work is fragmented. Member States who participate in these financial institutions should explore ways to achieve greater efficiency. Through common strategic alignment and programmatic cooperation, more predictable, larger, and efficient financing volumes can be ensured (see also Recommendation 2 and Recommendation 6).

Accelerating to SDG 2 and achieving a fairer and more sustainable food future for all requires a realignment of power within the global food architecture. Better alignment between multilateral governance frameworks and national priorities is essential to reduce vertical fragmentation and ensure that policies address the real needs of stakeholders, particularly smallholder farmers and women and children. This includes, as a priority, holding governments to account on their commitments to food security while strengthening in-country policy coordination on food security. Governments have the primary role and responsibility for ensuring food security. The multilateral system must be designed to ensure they are held to account.

- **Enhance the authority and financing of the CFS as an independent, evidence-based voice in food security debates:** A stronger, sufficiently resourced, and autonomous Committee on World Food



Security (CFS) – not embedded in any specific agency and independent of the influence of even the most powerful nations – is needed to fully fulfil its role as a multi-stakeholder governance body in which key constituencies can meaningfully articulate their voice.

- **Formally include the voices of farmer organizations, communities, consumers, and the private sector in decision-making on food in multilateral agencies.** The voices of farmers, particularly women farmers, have been too often excluded, yet they are essential to correctly identifying national and international priorities. Several organizations in the UN system, including ILO and UNAIDS, already formally include representatives from entities other than national governments in their governance system, while others like ITU allow academic institutions, private sectors, and regional organizations to be “members” of the agency, albeit with different responsibilities and voting rights from governments.
- **Undertake a year-on-year mapping of all commitments on food and nutrition security made by national governments since 2015.** This could take the form of a UNFCCC Nationally Determined Contributions style action-and-accountability process, in which governments must register, in a transparent and publicly accessible way, how they are financing, measuring, and tracking progress on food and nutrition security. An appropriate independent entity could be tasked with this mapping.
- **Establish a global parliamentarians network on food and nutrition security,** that builds on existing regional parliamentary networks for food, such as the Parliamentary Network for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa and the Arab World, in line with successful models such as the UNITE Parliamentarians Network for Global Health. Such a body could prioritize the strengthening of national, cross-ministerial coordination on food and nutrition (e.g., among agriculture, health, environment, and other ministries) to ensure a joined up and expanded food systems approach in line with international commitments. This would enable coherent, actionable outcomes that drive progress towards SDG 2.



## Annual Joint Meeting of the Food Governance Group

### The problem

Three systemic governance challenges contribute to the lack of progress on food security outcomes: **(1)** fragmentation and a lack of coordination among the major food-related actors (including but also beyond the RBAs); **(2)** too much competition between these entities, both for funding and in implementation and programming; **(3)** insufficient ways of holding governments accountable for commitments they make across multiple fora.

### What is the proposed solution?

In recent years the RBAs have strengthened their coordination processes at the governance level. One outcome of this has been the Informal Joint Meetings of the **FAO Council, IFAD Executive Board and the WFP Executive Board**. The **Commission** proposes that these informal meetings be enlarged and formalized into a **bi-annual Joint Meeting of the Food Governance Group (FGG)**, comprising governing board representatives from an expanded group of the primary food organizations (RBAs plus WB plus CGIAR) as well as **UNICEF** (as the proposed first thousand days nutrition lead – see Recommendation 1). This new standing meeting would enable a formal high-level joint assessment of coordination, cooperation, and shared accountability at the governance level, leading to measures for improvements in each of these areas, clarified lines of accountability, and enhanced ability to speak with one voice when needed.

### How would it work

The **FGG** would be a substantial evolution at the level of food security governance. While recognizing that the participating organizations are differently constituted and governed, such a body is needed to steer high-level strategic priority setting within each represented agency and organization, backed by horizontal accountability between and among them. As a standing arrangement, the bi-annual **FGG** would evolve what is at present an informal forum focused on joint programming, into a means for identifying and addressing overarching priorities at the governance level within and beyond the RBAs. It would further receive input from a more autonomous **CFS** (see Recommendation 1), thereby ensuring a Science-Policy Interface (SPI) component to its decision-making. The **FGG** would be expected to comprise no more than 20 representatives in total, drawn from members of each organization's governing body, with the exact composition needing to be carefully thought through to ensure the equitable representation of a diverse set of countries and organizations.

### Likely impact

Bringing together the representatives of governing bodies of different organizations would enhance understanding of what other organizations are doing, and perhaps should not be doing. This would mitigate challenges of competition, prevent overlaps in programming and provide a strengthened layer of horizontal accountability. In addition, the **FGG** would provide a forum for governments (as both implementers and donors) to hold each other to account on what they commit to in different organizations, while also bringing in voices from civil society and other multistakeholder representatives.



## Recommendation 2

### ENHANCE FOOD SYSTEMS GOVERNANCE THROUGH MORE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF, AND ACCESS TO, RELEVANT DATA

Effective decision-making depends on sound and accessible information, which goes beyond data. While food systems generate vast amounts of data, it is often unavailable in the right formats or at the right times and is inconsistently collected and reported on.

Accelerating the push for zero hunger requires improved measurement capacity and more effective governance of the resulting data. Agreed common principles and practices must underpin unified methodologies and data collection strategies, improving program coordination and data disaggregation between multilateral agencies. Above all, there is a need for more actionable insights into the allocation of resources for the food insecure, ensuring this information is timely, consistent, and easily aggregated. The most vulnerable cannot be “reached” unless they can be “seen” – and must be seen fast enough for action to be taken. This means data must be more consistently available in real time.

The Commission recommends that multilateral agencies take a more proactive approach in using new technologies to enhance data governance and measurement, while ensuring broad political support and accessible use of the data. Improved data on food systems would also strengthen the case for greater investment in food and nutrition security. To improve data quality and ensure alignment between data and decision-making in governance processes:

→ **A technically capable and authoritative body, such as UN-DESA, should oversee and drive cross-sectoral collaboration on food and nutrition data provision and governance.** This should include establishing shared principles and

practices for data use across agencies and increasing interoperability. This will involve aligning existing trackers and dashboards and building on the lessons of previous efforts, such as the Global Alliance for Food Security. Greater use of open access platforms and technologies, including crowd-sourced data (such as FAOs Food Loss App) from farmers, should also be encouraged.

→ **Governments and IFIs should support efforts to better track total financing for food system transformations to enable greater transparency and accountability on financing for food and nutrition.** This includes efforts led by the World Bank and IFAD, in collaboration with the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, to develop a common budgeting tool for greater clarity on total domestic, international public, and private finance flows, and could add standards such as a gender equality marker, modeled on the UN data cube approach.<sup>18</sup>

**The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)** is recognized as the “gold standard” for food security monitoring and analysis<sup>19</sup> and is a critical pillar of global responses to hunger. Yet the organization is currently underfunded and may have to reduce its current coverage in the face of growing food crises.<sup>20</sup> IPC global partners should commit to:

→ **Strengthening how the IPC is governed in line with its increased profile in the food security system.** This includes establishing more independent oversight, involving Global South representatives to a larger extent, and incorporating gender considerations. In cases of conflict, or when there is reluctance to declare objectively reported famine, regional bodies should have clear mechanisms to intervene on reporting and compliance.

→ **Delivering on existing donor (e.g., G7) commitments to increase financial support to the IPC,** allowing it to highlight and monitor global food insecurity more effectively.

“ **The Commission unites diverse perspectives to provoke rethinking and mobilize action against rising food insecurity driven by conflict and climate change. By engaging stakeholders and proposing systemic reforms, we aim to transform food systems governance and inspire urgent change to achieve a hunger-free world.** ”

Mariana Vasconcelos, Commissioner

- **Promoting and supporting an increase in country participation in the IPC,** to as many of the 75 IDA countries as possible, in order to improve data coverage and actionability.

International policymaking is increasingly rooted in scientific evidence, not only to identify needs and solutions but also to gain traction with stakeholders and the public. There is broad consensus among policy makers that the SPI for food systems needs to be strengthened. However, to avoid further fragmentation, any new SPI platform, such as an IPCC for Food, or expanded existing body, must:

- **Complement the existing food-related SPIs and reduce inconsistencies across them.** Existing bodies include the High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) at the CFS, the IPBES, and the expert bodies of the CODEX Alimentarius Commission.
- **Ensure that multilateral decision-making integrates plural forms of knowledge** encompassing the disciplines of natural science, social science and humanities, as well as indigenous and local knowledge systems.



## Actionable

insights into the allocation of resources for the food insecure, ensuring this information is timely, consistent, and easily aggregated.



## Proactive

approach in using new technologies to enhance data governance and measurement.



GOVERNANCE SHIFT 02

# Delivering on Prevention

Prevent the Slide into Hunger  
through Peacebuilding for Food  
Security and Social Protection







Current approaches to food and nutrition security usually fall into one of two categories: humanitarian or development interventions. Both have crucial roles to play, but the actions needed to mitigate the underlying drivers of food and nutrition security often go overlooked.<sup>21</sup> Early preventive action is a much more effective strategy, in terms of both costs and outcomes, than responding to in-country crises which have already descended into extreme distress. Yet the multilateral system too often delays comprehensive action.<sup>22</sup>

Alongside a continued humanitarian vigilance, and a continued developmental commitment to food and nutrition access, the international system must do more to prevent the slide into hunger. Insufficient social security systems are a key driver of food insecurity, which in turn is a primary driver of conflict.<sup>23</sup> Yet food security is not sufficiently prioritized in social protection policies and is often left out of peacebuilding approaches altogether.

Ending conflict is beyond the scope of multilateral food security efforts and social protection is primarily the responsibility of national governments. However, the Commission sees two crucial pathways through which international actors can expand their role to support each of these prevention agendas.

First, greater accountability, under existing legal frameworks and international human rights and humanitarian law, is needed to ensure food and nutrition security during conflict. UN Security Council Resolution 2417, on conflict induced food insecurity and the threat of famine, was a victory for the multilateral system when unanimously adopted in 2018.<sup>24</sup> Yet warring parties have too often failed to comply. Increased use of legal action, such as the provisional measures in the case initiated by South Africa against Israel on the situation in Gaza before the ICJ, may therefore need to play a more prominent role.

Second, the multilateral system has a critical role to play in supporting the mainstreaming of enhanced systems of social protection. Governments must take the lead on social protection, but multilateral agencies need to provide adequate normative, financial, and programmatic support, particularly at times when national capacities are in crisis or under acute strain. Social protection is critical for addressing multiple dimensions of poverty and improving nutrition outcomes.<sup>25</sup> It can also play a vital role in the mitigation of conflict.

## Sudan Case Study

In April 2022, war erupted in Sudan between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

The war has already resulted in one of the world's worst displacement crises and is now producing one of the world's most severe hunger crises. The conflict and the near-complete lack of humanitarian access are driving heightened food insecurity across Sudan. More than half of the Sudanese population, over 25 million people, are facing acute food insecurity at IPC Phase 3 (crisis) levels or greater.<sup>27</sup> In December 2023, Gezira state shifted from SAF control to RSF and by the end of 2024, was once again experiencing intense conflict. This region is Sudan's food basket, which means the war has greatly affected the agricultural sector. At the end of 2024, the Humanitarian Response Plan for Sudan remained only 58 percent fulfilled,<sup>28</sup> and global leaders continue to accuse the Sudanese government of intentionally blocking the delivery of aid, into Darfur in particular.

Despite these challenges, two important sources of support have emerged: remittances and community-based support. Remittances from the Sudanese diaspora remain a lifeline for many. Additionally, the emergence of community-based Emergency Response Rooms (ERRs) has been instrumental in filling gaps in humanitarian aid delivery. These grassroots initiatives, led by volunteers within affected communities, have reached individuals and groups in areas inaccessible to international organizations. ERRs have had an important impact on the landscape of humanitarian assistance, compelling international entities to reconsider how they engage with local actors and communities in crisis response efforts.

## Recommendation 3

### BUILD PEACE FOR FOOD SECURITY

For UN agencies and NGOs to effectively build peace they must do so in ways that empower local community-based partners in fragile contexts. Food security is critical to this. At the governance level, agencies need to rethink how food aid is managed in the political environments in which they operate. This will ensure longer-term development and peace interventions which are inclusive of local needs, as articulated by civil society.

UN agencies and NGOs also need to increase their capacity to anticipate and mitigate political tensions associated with aid interventions, while working to strengthen local governance structures. This requires integrating a clearly defined peacebuilding lens into food security strategies and an authoritative and publicly accountable voice to advocate for a stronger focus on food and peace. Priority interventions required include:

- **Donors to adopt a greater tolerance for risk.** This will empower multilateral agencies to respond promptly to emerging crises and more efficiently allocate resources to local partners, who are often better positioned to manage the complex realities on the ground in conflict-affected or at-risk countries.<sup>26</sup> This approach is especially urgent in the context of climate change, which is making crisis response more complex and multifaceted.
- **The UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) to allocate additional investments for food security,** strengthening support at the nexus of climate resilience, peace, and food security. Relatedly, the PBF should elevate food security as a priority area to sustain peace in countries.
- **The UN Secretary General to appoint a Special Representative (SR) on the Prevention of Conflict and Food Insecurity, and Member States to provide adequate resources for the SR's mandate.** In the context of escalating conflict-induced food crises, an SR is needed to promote implementation and adherence to UN Security Council Resolution 2417, mobilizing political support and leveraging early warning systems to prevent conflict-induced food crises. An SR would be well positioned to advocate for a strong focus on peace and conflict in global food system dialogues and to highlight non-compliance with Resolution 2417.
- **The Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus should guide programming on food and conflict.** The HDP Nexus Coalition should provide better data and evidence to inform UN country-level planning tools, including UN Cooperation Framework agreements and Humanitarian Needs and Response Plans. With conflict increasing, better informed multilateral coordination that fully leverages the peace pillar (protection, social cohesion, and local governance) of the nexus will be critical to food systems transformations in conflict-affected countries. It will also ensure local actors are better included in multilateral agendas (see Sudan Case Study, p.32).





## Recommendation 4

### MAINSTREAM SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR FOOD SECURITY

Social protection is central to the achievement of food and nutrition security, and the global food system must do more to address the full spectrum of food insecurity drivers, as highlighted by Brazil's Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty. The Commission welcomes the Brazilian government's leadership on this issue and applauds the 82 countries that have signed up to date.

The sheer scale of the problem, however, demands additional upstream support to break the cycle of poverty and hunger. Longer-term and more prevention-oriented interventions in food-related economic insecurity require integrating food-focused policies into strengthened social protection systems.<sup>29</sup> While national governments must lead on this agenda, the multilateral system has a responsibility to ensure that the right financial and programming support is in place, when needed, to ensure access to sufficient and nutritious food.

By driving stronger and more coherent country and regional implementation, global food actors can do more to ensure that country-level activities reach those most in need when in-country capacities are limited. These programs must pay particular attention to the vulnerabilities of mothers and children, while adopting an anticipatory approach to best predict future needs, particularly during a crisis.

→ **All governments should support the G20 Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty.** It is imperative that governments commit both to implement nationally and to support internationally, a global social security safety net. This safety net will ensure all people at all times can afford safe and nutritious food.

- **Access to nutritious food for mothers and children must be scaled up.** UNICEF has shown what can be done in expanding access to nutritious food for mothers and children, with the School Meals Coalition playing a vital role. As highlighted in UNFSS+2, it is critical, post-pandemic, that school meal programs and food fortification efforts are scaled and improved to kick start food systems transformations. In line with Recommendation 1, these efforts should be intensified via continuous school feeding programs financed domestically and monitored and backstopped by the international system.
- **Governments and relevant partners to establish a Food Security Protection Mechanism (FSPM)** to provide pre-agreed upstream support for countries which have reached certain food and nutrition security stress indicators (for more detail, see p.35).





Ivan Bandura / Unsplash

## A Food Security Protection Mechanism (FSPM)

The Commission proposes a Food Security Protection Mechanism (FSPM) that supports the prevention of (rather than response to) global food security crises. Such a mechanism would provide an international framework for new early response capacity, covering the IPC 2 category of “stressed”.

This global governance innovation would galvanize actors, including the WB, WFP, UNICEF, and relevant INGOs, in support of a predefined social protection response, capable of addressing the multiple shocks poor households are exposed to under IPC level 2. Such a mechanism would need to be developed within the scope of ILO Recommendation 202 on social protection floors. It would also need to respect the principle of subsidiarity: where possible, local governments should implement programs, with the support of the international community where required.

The FSPM would work by connecting a data observatory component for real time monitoring and prediction, a financing component, and an implementation component, to deliver a coordinated and anticipatory social protection response by governments and implementing partners.

The observatory component would include an adapted IPC Early Warning System mechanism and leverage Artificial Intelligence (AI) platforms to more powerfully process risk monitoring data (e.g., enhanced IPC data) along with other triangulated data sources (on, for instance, political or market information). The financing component would action agreed social protection interventions, like cash handouts. The implementation component would ensure international support responses formulated by national and local governments, and would ensure adequate monitoring and reporting.



GOVERNANCE SHIFT 03

# Food as a Global Public Good

Elevate Food Systems Sustainability  
as a Global Responsibility





**The global production and supply of food have become increasingly globalized since the last major transformation of the global food governance architecture. A sustainable global food system now depends on integrating food and agriculture into broader global governance agendas, including climate, finance, and trade, which significantly influence national capacities to act.**

Treating the management and safeguarding of food systems as a global public good is critical to this effort. This may take the form of research and development, climate adaptation, biodiversity preservation, and adopting the WHO's One Health approach. Achieving food and nutrition security, as well as upholding the right to food, requires a more equitable and sustainable global food system as a shared international responsibility.<sup>30</sup>

To date, approximately 4 percent of total climate finance has gone to food and agriculture, even as global food systems account for approximately 25 to 30 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>31</sup> The Commission welcomes the steps articulated in the UAE Declaration on Food and Agriculture at COP28 to address this gap. But more work is required to fully integrate food systems governance into the international climate agenda. The upcoming United Nations Food Systems Summit +4, along with the UAE Declaration, the UN Food Systems and Climate Action Convergence Initiative, AIM for Climate, the Initiative on Climate Action and Nutrition (I-CAN), and the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture, offer further opportunities to strengthen policies and coordinate actions at the nexus of food and climate.

The recently concluded Pact for the Future, and the UN Secretary General's High Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism before it, highlight the extent to which reform of the international financial architecture has moved to the top of the global agenda. Food systems,

and the way they are financed, should be central to discussions. Additional domestic resources will be essential to managing food system transformations within countries. At the same time, governments must be held accountable for fulfilling international financing commitments.

Food plays a central role in international trade, yet food trade remains highly unequal. Maintaining a free and efficient global food trade system requires its own targeted governance interventions.<sup>32</sup> Lower-income countries need greater support to advance or complete sustainable food system transformations and fully engage in global food markets. This responsibility lies with governments, both in their negotiations with one another and in their commitment to upholding key WTO principles and disciplines. A shared dedication to managing global food infrastructure as a global public good is essential in this effort.

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**“ As we confront mounting challenges to end hunger, we must prioritize inclusive, sustainable, and accountable solutions to secure a resilient food future for all. This vision demands multi-generational involvement, elevating the crucial roles of youth, farmers, and educators in preserving living heritage while embracing technology as an ally.**

**Sara Roversi, Commissioner**

## Recommendation 5

### FULLY INTEGRATE FOOD SYSTEMS INTO CLIMATE AND NATURE GOVERNANCE AGENDAS

The multilateral food security architecture is yet to fully leverage the critical connection between climate, nature, and food governance, despite their clear interdependence. Although Member States have expressed strong commitment to aligning food systems transformations with climate action agendas, greater international coordination is urgently needed. Key actions to be taken are:

- **WB and RBAs to expand existing anticipatory action programs**, given their potential to address emergent climate and biodiversity loss challenges in food security.
- **COP host governments, supported by the UNFCCC Secretariat, must ensure food systems remain a priority in COP discussions.** This builds on the existing COP28 Declaration and the UN Food Systems and Climate Action Convergence Initiative, utilising UNFSS+4 (and other fora) to bolster and consolidate international policies and action.
- **Governments to align their domestic climate policies with the needs and realities of food systems transformations.** Integrating food system transformations into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which outline each country's commitments to reducing emissions and adapting to climate change, offers a largely untapped opportunity to advance future-focused food and farming practices. These include strategies for improving soil health, preserving biodiversity, and promoting sustainable agriculture.
- **CGIAR and its partner organizations should intensify efforts to develop accessible regenerative and climate-**

**smart agricultural solutions**, with a focus on key priorities like soil health and seed systems. These efforts should address food, land, and water as interconnected global public goods, supporting the achievement of NDCs, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

- **Increase municipal government collaboration through city-scale climate and food security initiatives**, such as the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, FAO's Green Cities Initiative, C40 Cities, and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. Addressing the role of food consumption in cities is critical to global climate goals, given that, by 2050, 80 percent of all food is expected to be consumed in cities. It is imperative that local food sustainability initiatives are designed and managed with the objective of ensuring a coordinated global impact on greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>33</sup>







# 4%

of total climate finance has gone to food and agriculture.



# 25%

circa, of global greenhouse gas emissions come from the global food system.



# \$7.5b

have been raised by WFP to meet projected needs of \$23.5 billion, leading to the withdrawal or reduction of support for those facing acute hunger, including in Syria, Sudan, Haiti, and Yemen.

## Recommendation 6

### PROVIDE A CLEAR STRATEGY FOR FINANCING FOOD SYSTEMS AS A GLOBAL PUBLIC GOOD

A critical gap has emerged between need and financial allocation in hunger response, with over half of the necessary funding presently going unmet.<sup>34</sup> The RBAs are facing their worst funding shortfalls in recent history. In 2023, the WFP was able to raise just \$7.5 billion of a \$23.5 billion<sup>35</sup> projected need, leading to the withdrawal or reduction of support for those facing acute hunger, including in Syria, Sudan, Haiti, and Yemen.

The insufficient funding of core institutions and their activities remains a significant and growing challenge for the global food security architecture, often leaving agencies and initiatives unable to fulfill their mandates effectively. In the short term, it is crucial to find ways to maximize impact with limited resources, such as by reducing duplications and improving efficiencies.

Changing patterns and preferences among the primary donor countries further contribute to a dynamic (and increasingly difficult) funding landscape. Some donors target their own, more constrained Official

Development Assistance (ODA) budgets at emergency response over prevention efforts, despite the fact that longer-term savings can be made by doing the opposite. Others are finding ways to reduce their responsibilities.

All donors want to demonstrate a direct and measurable impact of their funding allocations, which leads to a reduction in core (untied) funding and a rise in voluntary (tied) contributions. This creates competition for resources and pressure to deliver results, which leaves organizations disincentivized to look beyond their immediate internal agendas. Funders should change that and 'reward' collaboration instead.

As multifaceted public goods, food systems require committed public financing, such as through public investments and ODA, to ensure equity, and additional private funding in times of instability.

The global financial architecture must ensure access to safe and nutritious food as a global public good. Taxpayer funds currently allocated to unsustainable agricultural practices must be redirected. While calls for increased financing for international objectives persist, the current push to reform the international financial system creates an opportunity for meaningful change, including new approaches to global public investment that align with sustainability goals.



- **Government leaders to formally identify and promote innovative ways to sustainably finance food systems transformations** as part of a wider push for a new financial architecture that better supports low-income countries. Building on the recently concluded Pact for the Future, and looking ahead to Financing for Development IV in 2025, they should ensure that Action 3 of the Pact “To end hunger and eliminate food insecurity” is delivered on by:
  - (a) supporting affected countries and communities through coordinated action, financing, and resilience building; and
  - (b) assisting countries in debt distress to manage volatility in international food markets; and
  - (c) supporting partnerships between developing countries affected by food insecurity and international financial institutions and the United Nations.<sup>36</sup>
- **WB, IFAD and MDBs to establish a dedicated food and sustainability lending window** for agricultural and food systems transformations, especially in low-income countries. They should also explore debt pauses, debt for food swaps, and other innovative financing mechanisms for critical food security investments. As part of this, they should reassess and implement the 2022 IFI Action Plan to Address Food Insecurity.<sup>37</sup>
- **Expand the IMF Resiliency and Sustainability Trust to include food security** alongside climate and pandemic preparedness. This will boost the availability of longer term finance for multi-country food systems resilience and sustainability, including the adoption of new technologies, local R&D, and farmer training (see Recommendation 9).
- **Governments must take responsibility for more coherent financing of food agencies** (in support of Recommendation 1 on clarifying food and nutrition mandates) and must not renege on their commitments as a result of increased pressure on ODA budgets.
- **Institutional investors, along with the IFC and regionally led platforms, should establish common investment vehicles (“wrappers”)** that can act as intermediaries between global market liquidity and strategic in-country agricultural projects and initiatives. This could include sustainability bonds, pension funds, and ESG investments.



## Recommendation 7

### GOVERNMENTS TO COOPERATE TO ENSURE A MORE EQUITABLE FOOD TRADE REGIME

Growth in trade may be the single most important factor in giving more people access to sufficient food since the 1960s.<sup>38</sup> Trade also helps buffer against the persistent volatility of food prices, and some of the poorest countries in the world rely on trade to achieve food security. A free and functioning trade system is essential to ensuring food security for all.

Current day food trade is hampered by excessive restrictions and often exposed to geopolitical vulnerabilities, such as critical choke points in global supply chains (e.g. maritime passages).

Similarly, while sustainable agricultural policies are essential for achieving food security, it is crucial that the transition to sustainability does not result in reduced trade. Countries such as Haiti, Singapore, and Egypt, which depend heavily on food imports, highlight the importance of maintaining robust trade systems. To safeguard domestic food security, all nations require a degree of flexibility in their trade policies.

Governments must take greater responsibility in trade negotiations by addressing tariff and non-tariff barriers and subsidies that create pressure on WTO discussions. Additionally, countries must collaborate to reduce unpredictability in global food systems. Major global shocks, such as wars, financial crises, and the COVID-19 pandemic, have significantly impacted food prices and agricultural inputs, as demonstrated by the recent food price spikes triggered by the war in Ukraine.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, food trade policy is about more than just the volume of agricultural commodities traded. Today just three crops provide more than half the calories consumed globally.<sup>40</sup> Future food value chains are likely to become more complex, in line with new technologies, efficiencies, social preferences, and climate change. Global trade policy must adapt to address these challenges if hunger is to be eradicated permanently.

To achieve these ambitions, the following actions are proposed:

- **The G20 to fully enact the 2023 G20 Deccan High Level Principles on Food Security and Nutrition, especially Principle 4**, which commits G20 countries to “[f]acilitate open, fair, predictable and rules-based agriculture and food trade, avoid export restrictions and reduce market distortions, in accordance with relevant WTO rules.”<sup>41</sup>
- **Governments should make concerted progress on the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA)**, redouble their efforts to abide by WTO trade disciplines on food and agriculture, and work together to review and reform the green box system (see Annex 2 of the AoA).
- **Governments should adhere to harmonized international standards on food**. This will become increasingly critical, in the face of rising innovations from new technology platforms and the growing proliferation of bilateral and regional trade arrangements.
- **Governments and relevant international organizations such as UN-Oceans, should work to preempt and mitigate food supply chain vulnerabilities**, drawing on relevant agreements such as UNCLOS for maritime routes, and should cooperate to diversify and manage supply lines and trade corridors.<sup>42</sup>

GOVERNANCE SHIFT 04

# Shaping the Future

Manage Future Food and Nutrition  
Needs through Anticipatory Approaches





The global food security architecture must adapt to confront a coming era of persistent and multidimensional crises. By anticipating these future challenges and embracing technological opportunities, more resilient systems can be built.

Recognizing that vulnerabilities are multidimensional, and that large scale transformations precipitated by conflict, climate change, technology, and urbanization are reshaping and intensifying the pressures on governance structures, the global food and nutrition governance architecture must urgently develop forward-looking solutions to global food and nutrition security.

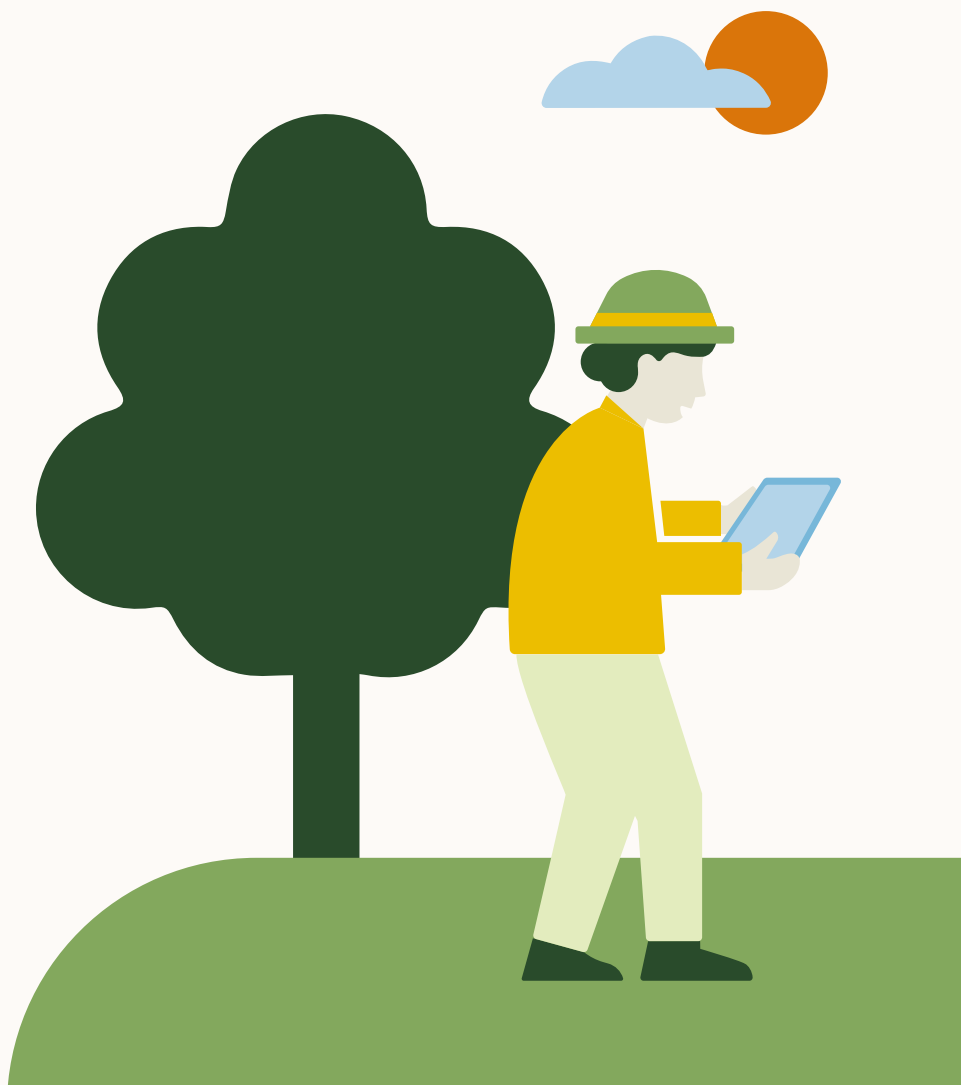
The farmers that produce most of the world's food are private actors, however, and the incentives required for them to address food insecurity, adopt sustainable practices, and contribute to long-term resilience need strengthening. Through targeted incentives and better functioning markets, the international private sector can be encouraged to play a more transformative role in addressing food insecurity and achieving more nutritious, sustainable, and resilient food systems.

This is not only a challenge about where and how to invest. Farmers must be empowered as transformative actors. This means addressing low farmer take-up of rapid technological innovation at present, while valuing the vital traditional skills passed through generations. This requires substantial investment in farmer education, particularly for young and women farmers, as well as in R&D.

Local environments and global structures are evolving to impact food systems. Rapid urbanization, for example, frequently undermines smallholder farming, promotes poorer diets, and threatens biodiversity. Fostering more positive, mutually beneficial relationships between the urban and the rural sector will be increasingly important in building a sustainable and resilient food system that supports the world's growing urban population.

**“ Achieving food security for all requires greater collective accountability – a “common commitment” by all stakeholders that can better address the structural determinants of hunger and malnutrition. This requires a change in how and for whom food security is governed.”**

**Dr Soumya Swaminathan, Commissioner**



## Recommendation 8

### ENGAGE THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR MORE RESILIENT AND HEALTHIER FOOD ECONOMIES

The private sector plays a crucial role in achieving the right to food and driving long-term food system resilience. Governments must support a rules-based multilateral system that fosters responsible private sector investments, particularly for the benefit of vulnerable populations. Additionally, government interventions are essential to reduce risk for private sector investors without deprioritizing public needs.

Effective investment environments are critical to ensuring greater private sector contributions to global food security. Multilateral partnerships, such as AGRA and the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development, can play a critical role in shaping private finance flows, either by guiding the creation of stable policy and operating environments or by ensuring that investments in hard and soft infrastructure are joined up beyond national borders.

Private sector entities also have a direct role to play in delivering healthier and more resilient food systems. This requires them to look beyond their own bottom line to find ways to fulfill their larger societal role over the longer term. Consumers need protecting and empowering, and have powerful and, to date, underutilized, market-shaping potential. They can put pressure on multilateral actors and national governments to shift incentives for corporate actors.

The Commission calls for more joined-up private sector approaches particularly towards lower- and middle-income countries. This could be achieved in the following ways:

- ➔ **Governments and IFIs to implement structured incentives for the private sector, enabling it to contribute more to food security.** This could include: blended finance, de-risking, stronger financial and political support for investments in food insecure contexts, more efficient use of taxes, public procurement policies, and business innovation support.
- ➔ **Private sector entities in the food sector should comply with the CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems.**<sup>43</sup> This will help maximize positive impacts on food security and nutrition, minimize negative outcomes, and contribute to the progressive realization of the right to food.
- ➔ **Consumer organizations and business leaders should appoint food and nutrition champions.** These champions should drive demand-side agendas on issues including food waste, healthy diets, and the right to adequate food in multilateral processes. Commitments like those made by the Consumer Goods Forum to halve food waste among its members should be encouraged and expanded.
- ➔ **Monitoring and accountability platforms, such as the Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNI), should be strengthened to enable more market-shaping interventions that guide global investment portfolios towards sustainable and equitable agriculture.**





## Recommendation 9

### EMPOWER FARMERS TO CREATE SUSTAINABLE FOOD FUTURES

Farmers require targeted support to adopt sustainable practices and contribute to long-term resilience of food systems. This support should address the distinct needs of farmers, from smallholders to larger actors, ensuring they are equipped to contribute effectively to sustainable markets.

Food is a knowledge-based sector, and there is a pressing need for greater investment in and access to research, technology, and innovation to support farmers. They face increasingly complex challenges in growing food, requiring continuous adaptation and learning. Organizations like CGIAR, including CIMMYT and others, already play a pivotal role in co-creating and sharing knowledge.

The governance of this research infrastructure is critical. Technology must be recognized not as an optional enhancement but as a necessity for advancing food security. This means that support must be given for longer term research that can enable real efficiency savings over time. Farmers also need better access to the cutting-edge research, innovation, and technology that is vital for many of the systemic transformations ongoing and outlined above. This requires priority investments in Global South-based R&D.<sup>44</sup>

The multilateral system has a crucial role to play in amplifying the voices of smallholder farmers during priority setting, such as through the CFS private sector and civil society mechanism and the UNFSS. At present, farmer representation is insufficient within the global food security architecture (see Recommendation 1).

Both the CFS and UNFSS can help raise farmers' concerns and should not be seen as competing fora. Instead, a common consensus on their roles should be reached and their respective funding needs addressed.

In addition to including farmers more meaningfully in the global governance of food, the Commission proposes that farmers be empowered by:

- **Strengthening the capacities of CGIAR through its proposed 2025-2030 Portfolio** to demonstrably improve the literacy, uptake, and capacity of farmers and encourage governments to support more farmer-responsive national agricultural research institutions.
- **FAO to action the proposed International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture** as a coordinating mechanism and advisory service to create linkages between international organizations and fora that focus on food and agriculture, and to oversee a coordinated and equitable uptake of digital agriculture.

Food plays a central role in culture. There are over two hundred Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) in which agricultural knowledge has passed through generations to support local food security, natural resource management, and genetic diversity conservation.<sup>45</sup> Agricultural education is key to sustaining traditional practices that conserve indigenous systems. The future of our food systems is also reliant on education to generate new ideas for sustainable food and agriculture. This includes the task of educating consumers so that they can more critically engage with where their food comes from, how it is produced, and what food labels really mean. To support agricultural education, the Commission calls for:

- **UNESCO (in partnership with UN-Habitat) to coordinate and support a global network of emergent civil society led food innovation labs.** These labs can actively shape the processes of food production, distribution, consumption, and disposal, and help to promote ethical and inclusive adoption of new technologies such as AI.

## Recommendation 10

### ADVANCE DIGITAL AND INNOVATIVE GOVERNANCE APPROACHES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF WOMEN AND YOUTH ON AN UNEQUAL PLANET

Planetary transformations, including urbanization and climate change, are intensifying livelihood pressures. Very often these changes disproportionately impact women. Data show that 16 million more women and girls lived in extreme poverty (388 million in total) in 2022 than men and boys. This disparity is particularly pronounced in Sub-Saharan Africa, where over half these women reside. Women farmers often face a lack of ownership rights to land and access to essential resources<sup>46</sup> making it harder for them to implement mitigation or adaptation strategies. This is compounded by the uneven uptake of new technological capacities, enhancing the capacities of some while leaving others isolated. These dynamics are further altering food demand patterns and consumer preferences regarding how, where, and what food is produced.<sup>47</sup>

Women can play a critical role as agents of change. Achievement of women's equality in agrifood systems would boost the economy by \$1 trillion and reduce food insecurity by 45 million people.<sup>48</sup> As the world builds towards the International Year of the Woman Farmer in 2026, food security governance must prioritize addressing the needs of women. Empowering women through gender-responsive policies and interventions can not only reduce gender-based inequalities, but also enhance food security globally.

To address these challenges and to empower women, the Commission recommends:

→ **Embracing and supporting digital public infrastructure for food and nutrition** to ensure that the power of digitalized systems (of payment,

ID-based access to social protection resources, digital credentialing, and user-generated content) is made equitable and accessible. Especially for women farmers, this will allow them to know and claim their rights and assets, and access essential technologies and services.<sup>49</sup>

→ **Tailoring programming to meet the challenges of urbanization** in the way that humanitarian organizations have in recent years. While agriculture remains a predominantly rural practice, food insecurity will increasingly be a problem for urban and peri-urban governance.<sup>50</sup> Strengthening the vertical links between municipal governments, urban-focused agencies (such as UN-Habitat), and food agencies will help ensure that large scale infrastructure and urban development strategies contribute to food security.

To date, youth-led organizations have been among the strongest advocates for food system transformation, specifically on the right to food and food sovereignty, yet their voice is absent within formal governance structures at the multilateral level. To enable a more meaningful and formative participation of young people in policy processes, the Commission calls for:

→ **Youth to have a formal role in the governing structures of the major food agencies**, both by engagement with the UN Major Group for Children and Youth and through establishment of Youth Councils (with a direct advisory role to the Executive) as already used by the Global Fund, for example. This will facilitate local ownership of food choices that are multigenerational, multilevel, and multisectoral, aligning with the demand from youth (see Youth Survey results on p.48) for more decentralized forms of governance.





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## Youth Consultation

**The Kofi Annan Commission on Food Security commissioned a Youth Working Group that brought together four young food security experts and practitioners to consult with their regional youth networks.**

A total of 481 youth respondents from around the world contributed to the surveys. A key concern highlighted across the surveys was the insufficient inclusion of young people in decision-making processes related to food security. For example, in Latin America (150 survey responses), despite extensive interaction with local, regional, and multilateral organizations, most respondents did not feel included or supported in decision-making. Even when engaged in governance forums, their inputs were often disregarded. There was a strong

call for youth voices to be included more meaningfully in policymaking, and in the design and implementation of food security programs. Additionally, young people cited financial and technical knowledge barriers as key obstacles to accessing the latest technologies and practices. A notable gap exists between multilateral institutions and youth due to the mishandling of funds by some national governments, notably in Africa and Latin America. This is contributing to a lack of trust among young people who want to be more engaged in policymaking but do not trust their governments, and in turn, multilateral organizations. Effective inclusion needs to be built from the local to the national levels before looking at comprehensive and complex multilateral system reform.



# Endnotes



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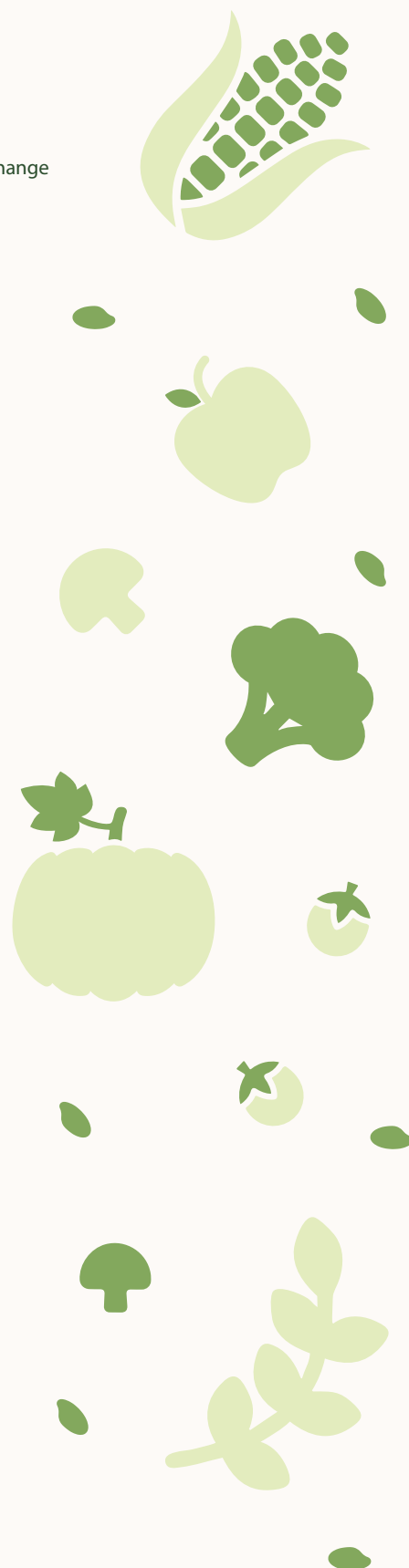
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# List of Abbreviations



**AGRA:** Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa  
**AI:** artificial intelligence  
**AoA:** Agreement on Agriculture  
**ATNI:** Access to Nutrition Initiative  
**CFS:** Committee on World Food Security  
**CGIAR:** Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research  
**CIMMYT:** International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center  
**COP:** Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change  
**ERR:** Emergency Response Rooms  
**ESG:** environmental, social and governance  
**FAO:** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
**FGG:** Food Governance Group  
**FIES:** Food Insecurity Experience Scale  
**FSPM:** Food Security Protection Mechanism  
**G20:** Group of 20  
**G7:** Group of 7  
**GIAHS:** Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems  
**HDP:** Humanitarian-Development-Nexus  
**HLPE:** High-Level Panel of Experts  
**I-CAN:** Initiative on climate action and nutrition  
**ICJ:** International Court of Justice  
**IDA:** International Development Association  
**IFAD:** International Fund for Agricultural Development  
**IFC:** International Finance Corporation  
**IFI:** international finance institution  
**IFPRI:** International Food Policy Research Institute  
**ILO:** International Labour Organization  
**IMF:** International Monetary Fund  
**IO:** International Organization  
**IPC:** Integrated Food Security Phase Classification  
**IPCC:** The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change  
**ITU:** International Telecommunication Union  
**MDB:** Multilateral Development Bank  
**NDC:** Nationally Determined Contributions  
**NGO:** Non-Governmental Organisation  
**ODA:** Official Development Assistance  
**PBF:** The UN Peacebuilding Fund  
**R&D:** Research and Development  
**RBA:** Rome-based agency  
**RSF:** Rapid Support Forces  
**SAF:** Sudanese Armed Forces  
**SDGs:** Sustainable Development Goal  
**SPI:** Science-Policy-Interface  
**SR:** Special Representative  
**UNAIDS:** Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS  
**UNCLOS:** United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea  
**UN-DESA:** United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
**UNESCO:** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization  
**UNFCCC:** United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change  
**UNFSS:** United Nations Food Systems Summit  
**UNICEF:** United Nations Children's Fund  
**WB:** World Bank  
**WFP:** World Food Programme  
**WHO:** World Health Organization







# Kofi Annan Commission on Food Security



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“ Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

World Food Summit of 1996

