



# HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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## SDG 2 and interlinkages with other SDGs

*Tuesday, 9 July 2024, 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM*

### Secretariat Background Note

As the United Nations Secretary-General makes clear in his 2024 report “Progress Toward the Sustainable Development Goals,” the world is nowhere near where it needs to be to achieve the 2030 Agenda in the next 6 years.<sup>1</sup> The outlook has changed very little over the past year, with still only 15 per cent of SDG targets on track to be met by 2030.

Zooming in on SDG 2, trends are similarly sobering, with many countries and communities struggling to provide adequate, safe and nutritious food to their people. Interconnected and often mutually reinforcing challenges and drivers, including conflict, climate change and climate extremes, uneven recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, economic slowdowns and downturns, and growing structural inequalities, among other factors, all undermine progress on SDG 2. Details on the state of SDG 2 implementation include the following:

- In 2022, between 691 and 783 million people faced hunger. Additionally, 2.4 billion were moderately to severely food insecure.
- 37 million children under age 5 were overweight, and 45 million children under 5 suffered from wasting. Notably, the

<sup>1</sup> <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/SG%20SDG%20Progress%20Report%202024.pdf>



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projections for stunting have been improving year over year, though even if positive trends continue, 19.5 per cent of children globally will suffer from stunting in 2030.

- Small-scale food producers continue to earn less than half of the income of their larger counterparts, although small-scale producers and family farmers play a crucial role in global food production and in ensuring food security and nutrition, supplying 70 per cent of overall food production.<sup>2</sup>
- Food prices classified as “moderately to abnormally high” plagued a record number of countries around the world—58.1 per cent in 2022, which was up from the previous record of 48 per cent in 2020. Food prices continue to be driven by a range of factors, including supply chain disruptions from the war in Ukraine and the slow recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The overall statistics generally paint a troubling picture, and, furthermore, the impacts are not felt equally among and within countries. Women continue to face higher levels of food insecurity in all regions than men, due to their more limited access to assets and resources, various forms of gender inequality (such as unequal pay) and to discriminatory social norms. Agrifood systems provide significant employment globally, yet agricultural households constitute up to two-thirds of those living in extreme poverty. Although agrifood systems employ over one-third of the female workforce, their significant contributions are overshadowed as they often hold informal, low-paid, and vulnerable positions. Family farmers, women, youth, indigenous peoples, and minority ethnic

<sup>2</sup> CFS. 2019. [Policy recommendations on Connecting Smallholders to Markets](#).



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groups often face challenges in accessing financing and support services.

Where people live also plays a defining role in their risk of food insecurity and hunger. Rural communities often suffer from hunger more than urban centers. Over 80 per cent of people in income and multidimensional poverty reside in rural areas,<sup>3</sup> a situation exacerbated by urbanization and the aging rural population. And war zones and countries in conflict or fragile situations face a substantially increased risk of undernourishment.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the scourge of hunger and food insecurity, policymakers must also confront the environmental impact of unsustainable agrifood systems. Current agricultural practices and approaches contribute more than one third of global greenhouse gas emissions and as much as 80 per cent of biodiversity loss while consuming about 70 per cent of freshwater total use.<sup>5</sup> Global fish stocks are threatened by overfishing, pollution, poor management and other factors, including illegal fishing, with more than one third (35.4 per cent) of global stocks overfished in 2019.<sup>6</sup> While, globally, there has been some progress towards sustainable forest management in the last decade, progress is uneven across regions. Additionally, the world's forests continue to shrink, mainly because of the expansion of agriculture for crop and livestock production.<sup>7</sup>

To address these and other related challenges in food security and nutrition, governments and their partners must commit to a systems approach, taking integrated action across a range of relevant sectors,

<sup>3</sup> UNDP. 2023. [Global Multidimensional Poverty Index](#).

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.zef.de/fileadmin/webfiles/downloads/zef\\_dp/ZEF\\_DP\\_347.pdf](https://www.zef.de/fileadmin/webfiles/downloads/zef_dp/ZEF_DP_347.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> UN. 2023. [Report of the Secretary-General for the UN Food Systems Summit +2](#).

<sup>6</sup> FAO. 2023. [Tracking progress on food and agriculture-related SDG indicators 2023](#).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*



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and engaging diverse stakeholders from government at all levels, farmers, other parts of the private sector, civil society, local communities, and others. Peace and security, biodiversity and the environmental global commons, education and sustainable livelihoods, trade policy, and energy policy—decision-makers must consider all these sectors in order to effectively advance SDG 2 and create sustainable food systems across the globe.

The current session at the HLPF will therefore take a holistic, multi-sectoral approach to the discussion of SDG 2.

### Proposed questions for discussion

- How are global crises impacting food security and nutrition, and where and for which groups are these pressures felt most acutely?
- How can we accelerate actions and strengthen partnerships and governance to end hunger and malnutrition and realize the right to adequate food?
- How can we unlock the financing needed to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms?
- What are innovative solutions and best practices for sustainable and resilient agriculture? How is international and regional cooperation on food systems contributing to advancing SDG 2?