

Statement for the 2023 HLPF General Debate

Duration: 3 minutes

Mr./Ms. President, Excellencies, Distinguished representatives,

We convene amidst a global nutrition crisis of an unprecedented scale. More than 3 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet, representing an increase of 134 million people compared to 2019. COVID-19 has exacerbated this crisis, causing disruptions to food supply chains and straining health systems worldwide. The escalating climate change threatens to compound it even further.

Poor diets are fueling malnutrition, now the leading risk factor for death across the globe. The statistics are daunting: one in three individuals suffers from overweight or obesity, almost a quarter of children under 5 are stunted, 45 million children are wasted, and dietary risks claim 8 million lives annually.

Yet, amidst these harrowing figures, there is significant untapped potential.

Prioritizing nutrition in food system transformations can boost economic growth and societal resilience to a variety of shocks. Every dollar invested in nutrition can yield up to sixteen-fold returns in health and productivity. Enhanced focus on youth nutrition, gender-responsive approaches, and comprehensive social protection can further maximize these benefits. Such an investment not only addresses immediate nutritional needs, but it also paves the way for healthier people and a healthier planet.

Nutrition is not just a matter of health. Nutrition is a driving force for sustainable development, a fundamental cornerstone for accelerating progress towards our shared Sustainable Development Goals.

We cannot achieve these returns without sufficient funding for nutrition, a point our Scaling Up Nutrition member countries frequently emphasize. However, the pathway to achieving these returns requires more than sufficient funding; it demands innovative financing and better

tracking and alignment between investments, fostering climate-resilient food systems, and empowering local communities for lasting impact.

Excellencies, distinguished representatives,

The connection between nutrition and human capital cannot be overstated. Without adequate nutrition, we see a decline in human capital, which in turn perpetuates a vicious cycle of poverty.

As we prepare for the SDG Summit this September, it is crucial that we prioritize inclusivity in our efforts to implement the SDGs. This necessitates not only stirring the active engagement of civil society and the private sector, but also ensuring they align seamlessly with governmental plans and initiatives.

Let us seize the opportunity and work collectively to break the cycle of malnutrition and poverty. With the right investments, we can fast-track our progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and build a future where no one is left behind.

Thank you.