

**From Meena Bilgi –**

**SDG-2 -**

Thank you very much for giving me the floor. Both the panellists have categorically stated that development is not just about economic growth, but also about progress on varied number of issues addressing inter-linkages in a larger sense. Root causes of hunger and poverty must be addressed, such as wars, conflict, inadequate access to land, water, agricultural inputs, finance and markets, climate change and lack of participation in decision-making. Wars or militarism is one of the major obstacles to development in the contemporary world. The military expenditure is rising globally. As per the report of the International Peace Bureau, extra annual cost to reach the Millennium Development Goal in 2015 was a fraction of military spending at 329 billion. In situations of armed conflict, there is a tendency to suppress human rights, political opposition and democratic freedom. Innocent civilians continue to die. Poverty and inequality caused by neo-liberalism lead the marginalized communities specially women and children most affected by militaristic approach.

Despite being recognized as one of the most effective way to alleviate poverty and improve food security, public investments in agriculture is declining. Eradicating poverty, hunger and malnutrition go hand in hand. Transformative change in food and agriculture is necessary. This means moving beyond increasing production and sustainably for the health and well-being of people, without negative social and environmental externalities in land and water tenure, crop, livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and forestry systems including the loss of biological diversity. Governance of food systems will be essential for shaping food systems that support healthy diets, as well as other social and economic outcomes. Predominant unsustainable industrial agriculture and fisheries models are pushing out small farmers and artisanal fisher-people, majority of who are poor and women. Key to transformation is empowerment of small-scale producers including women, youth, indigenous peoples, pastoralists and fishers, who will continue to make up the vast majority of food producers and natural resource managers globally. Emphasis must be placed in promoting equitable sharing of opportunities and equal rights for both women and men farmers and agricultural producers. Urgent action is also needed to accelerate transformational changes to move beyond emergencies towards the development of inclusive, resilient and sustainable food systems for well-nourished and healthy people. Increased policy coherence amongst international legal and policy interests to achieve the SDG2 and all the SDGs is the call of the day.

While the programmes in India under the National Food Security Act cover more than 800 million people in the country. The Public Distribution System is one of the largest food security initiatives in the world. Other initiatives that contribute to this goal are the ICDS and the Mid-Day Meal Programme. The National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture in collaboration with other stakeholders is implementing climate change adaptation strategies for sustaining agricultural productivity. Since 2014, the land under organic farming has increased and a comprehensive plan is being implemented for doubling the farmers' income by 2022. A revamped crop insurance programme has also been launched. Despite all this, the Global Hunger Index Report predicts that India will fail to achieve its sustainable development goal target of ending hunger by 2030. There must be something wrong the way we have looked at hunger and under-nutrition. Our policies have approached hunger mainly as rural phenomena and as one of food scarcity. We need to identify emerging challenges of rapid urbanization of hunger and malnutrition, and increasing disconnect between food and nutrition. Women farmers play a critical role in food systems, including production, sustaining dietary diversity and providing for the health and nutrition of their families, yet they struggle for their rights to land and decision-making. India and many other developing countries will require a sea change in the policies and programmes to tackle hunger and under nutrition besides a determined political will and robust action. Other important determinants like

**livelihoods, decent wage, housing, drinking water, sanitation, education, open spaces will have to be factored in tackling hunger and under-nutrition. Food production aspects require strong action with view to minimize risks in the long run, rather than emphasizing maximizing production in the short term as mentioned before.**