Agrifood systems are among the first and the most impacted by crises with direct negative consequences on both poverty and hunger, as well as on deterioration of nature, with consequent effects on peace and stability.

To address the complex and closely interconnected global challenges related to agrifood systems we need an approach that seizes synergistic opportunities, while recognizing and addressing the trade-offs that impede progress. Elements of such approach include the following:

First, to ensure national ownership and commitment and increase financing and target investment that simultaneously support agrifood systems transformation and climate action. Towards this FAO has published a global roadmap to achieve SDG 2 and transform agrifood systems without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold. On the financing front a recent policy brief of FAO emphasizes the critical importance of leveraging domestic resources and effectively reallocating subsidies to amplify their efficacy in addressing food crises and fostering the transformation of agrifood systems.

Second, we need to manage natural resources sustainably and restore ecosystems: one third of the world’s agricultural land is degraded. FAO is promoting techniques like geospatial targeting, investments in reducing food loss and waste, innovations in precision agriculture, and advancements in circular bioeconomy must be leveraged as avenues for improving efficiency and effectiveness. The conservation and enhancement of soil health is also critical for increasing agricultural production and productivity.

Third, we need to understand the interconnection between nutrition, food security, poverty, and environment: The ability of the poor in both rural and urban areas to achieve nutritious and healthy diets depends on food availability and affordability. Extreme weather events and long-run climate change are disproportionately affecting the incomes of rural people living in poverty, in particular women and older populations, further restraining access to healthy diets. We therefore cannot tackle the challenges of the climate crisis separately from our efforts to address poverty and malnutrition.

Fourth, we must harness the power of inclusive social protection: expanding social protection programmes and measures are crucial for increasing resilience, especially for women and girls, and
Indigenous Peoples, who are pushed into vulnerability and more susceptible to risks and shocks due to social, economic and cultural factors, and discriminatory practices.

Excellencies, these are some of dozens of key interventions that have been identified by FAO though our analytical work, as priorities in efforts to make agrifood systems more resilient and sustainable. We need good food for all for today and tomorrow: agrifood systems have the highest potential to reduce negative externalities on the environment, while achieving the right to food. It is critical to act to reduce these externalities by increasing efficiencies and through redistribution with a just transition process.

For additional information, please see FAO key messages for the 2024 HLPF.