

Cover photos: Top ©Environmental Education Center of Kalamata /www.kpe-kalamatas.gr, central ©FAO/Luis Tato, bottom ©Adobe Stock/izzetugutmen

This document contains the Summary and Recommendations of the 15th report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE), “Food security and nutrition: building a global narrative towards 2030”.

The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Committee on World Food Security, of its members, participants, or of the Secretariat. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by the HLPE in preference to others of a similar nature which are not mentioned.

This document is made publicly available and its reproduction and dissemination is encouraged. Non-commercial uses will be authorized free of charge, upon request. Reproduction for resale or other commercial purposes, including educational purposes, may incur fees. Applications for permission to reproduce or disseminate this report should be addressed by e-mail to copyright@fao.org with copy to cfs-hlpe@fao.org.

FOREWORD

The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) is the science-policy interface of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), which is, at the global level, the foremost inclusive and evidence-based international and intergovernmental platform for food security and nutrition (FSN).

Lessons derived from the food crisis of 2007/2008 and the economic crisis of 2009 led to the reform of the CFS and the formation of the HLPE, so that decisions and the work of the CFS are based on the hard evidence of state of the art knowledge. The HLPE was created in October 2009 as an essential element of the CFS reform. The HLPE aims to facilitate policy debates and policy making by providing independent, comprehensive and evidence-based analysis and advice, at the request of the CFS. Monkombu Swaminathan, who was its inaugural Chair in 2010, suggested that the formation of the HLPE was a major step that can **“foster the emergence of a coalition of the concerned with reference to elimination of hunger.”**

The HLPE reports serve as a common, evidence-based starting point for the multi-stakeholder processes of policy convergence in the CFS. The HLPE strives to provide in its reports a comprehensive overview of the topics selected by the CFS, based on the best available scientific evidence and considering different forms of knowledge. It strives to clarify contradictory information and knowledge, to elicit the backgrounds and rationales of controversies and to identify emerging issues. The HLPE reports are the result of an inclusive and continuous dialogue between the HLPE experts (Steering Committee, Project teams, external peer reviewers) and a wide range of knowledge-holders across the world, building bridges across regions and countries, across scientific disciplines and professional experiences.

In October 2018, the HLPE was asked by the CFS to prepare a report that takes stock of its contributions, in order to inform future CFS actions on FSN for all in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Following the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the HLPE was asked to urgently prepare an issues paper on the potential impact of the pandemic on global food security and nutrition for an extraordinary meeting of the CFS on 19 March 2020. The key findings and recommendations from this issues paper have been updated and included in this report, and it is anticipated that the issues paper on COVID-19 will also continue to be updated by the HLPE, as needed. The current COVID-19 crisis is unprecedented in its global scale and the situation is changing rapidly, with many unknowns. It serves as a reminder of the fragility of the global food system and the importance of global coordination. On behalf of the HLPE, our thoughts go out to those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Beyond immediate health concerns from the COVID-19 crisis, short-, medium- and long-term impacts are expected on food systems and on food security and nutrition. Although there are many unknowns, it is already apparent that the most affected will be the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the population. The initial impacts of the pandemic have been in countries that have a well-developed food supply chain and modern health service. One of the major concerns is how the spread of COVID-19 will impact less developed countries, especially those that are already experiencing current food and health crises. As the virus has spread around the world, the short-term impacts to the food supply have been an increase in demand due to panic buying and hoarding of food, leading to shortages of some products. The measures put in place to “flatten the curve” of COVID-19 cases have been successful in terms of controlling the spread of the disease, but have also had significant economic impact with massive job losses, pushing people into poverty and affecting their ability to purchase food. School closures have meant, for millions of children, the loss of school meals, which help to reduce child malnutrition in many parts of the world. Restricting the movement of people has also meant the loss of access to fresh food, especially in countries that rely on local markets for fruit and vegetables. In the medium term, disruptions to the movement of farm labour and the supplies needed to grow food are starting to affect the supply side of the food chain and, if countries impose export restrictions, this could disrupt global supply chains and cause an increase in food prices. In the medium to long term, it is difficult to predict the extent and duration of the global recession. The major concern here is

that the global recession could push millions of people into extreme poverty and food insecurity. Without strong social protection measures, economic stimulus and global collaboration and trade, the public health impact of food insecurity may, in the end, be far greater than the actual disease itself.

Even before the outbreak of COVID-19, the state of global food security and nutrition was already alarming, with an estimated average of 821 million people undernourished and poor nutrition causing nearly 45 percent of the deaths on children under five. The timing of this report is therefore crucial. FSN indicators showed a lack of progress on meeting SDG 2 targets when work on this report began, and the COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged while preparing this report, has only made the situation more urgent.

Drawing on the findings of previous HLPE reports over the past decade, as well as the broader scientific literature, this report's key messages are:

- i. There is an urgent need for strengthening and consolidating conceptual thinking around FSN to prioritize the right to food, to widen our understanding of food security and to adopt a food systems analytical and policy framework.
- ii. FSN outcomes in recent years show the extent to which the global community is falling short on Agenda 2030 targets, especially SDG 2, and that food systems face a range of challenges – and some opportunities – linked to major trends in the drivers of food system change.
- iii. Policy approaches and actions for FSN, in light of the diverse challenges facing food systems, will require critical policy shifts and support for enabling conditions that uphold all dimensions of food security.

It is always difficult to argue the counterfactual, but if one of the key objectives of the CFS reform and the formation of the HLPE was to improve our understanding of food security, it has been successful. Without doubt, we have made significant progress since the food crisis of 2007/2008 in our understanding of the complex interrelated aspects of the global food system and the policies and actions that will be needed to uphold the right to food. On the current trajectory, however, without a radical transformation, we are not currently on track to deliver against SDG 2 by 2030. If the last decade has predominantly been about improving our understanding, then the next decade must focus on accelerating the implementation of policies and

innovative solutions, if we are to ensure global food and nutritional security for future generations.

The right to food is a fundamental human right that is inseparable from social justice. Feeding people is one of the primary objectives of any government, and is a part of national sovereignty. The complex and interconnected nature of food and nutritional security issues and their impacts on public and planetary health know no borders and, therefore, reinforce the importance of international coordination, not only to ensure the future health of the global food system but also for national governments to fulfil their own sovereign responsibility to feed their people.

Ten years on from the formation of the HLPE, it is appropriate to acknowledge the amazing contribution that previous HLPE Steering Committee members have made over the last decade to improve our understanding of food security and nutrition and to provide evidenced-based advice to the CFS and other actors in the global food security community. I would especially like to acknowledge the most recent outgoing chairperson, Patrick Caron, for his leadership and for encouraging that the CFS consider the work required for this report.

I would like to acknowledge the engagement and commitment of all the HLPE experts who worked on this report, and especially the HLPE Project Team Leader, Jennifer Clapp, and the Project Team Members: Barbara Burlingame, William Moseley and Paola Termine.

I would like to commend and thank the HLPE Secretariat for its precious support for the work of the HLPE. The COVID-19 pandemic meant that all the Steering Group meetings and deliberations had to be virtual, which presented additional challenges and work for the Secretariat to ensure that progress on the report was maintained. This report also benefited greatly from the suggestions of external peer reviewers and from the comments provided by an even larger than usual number of experts and institutions, both on the scope and on the first draft of the report.

Last but not least, I would like to thank those partners who provide effective and continuous financial support to the work of the HLPE in a totally selfless fashion

and thus contribute to the impartiality, objectivity and widely recognized quality of its proceedings and reports.

The COVID-19 pandemic serves as a timely reminder of the fragility of our global food system and the importance and urgency of the work that we do to foster the international coordination of a global strategic framework for food security and nutrition to end hunger.

Martin Cole

Chairperson, Steering Committee
of the HLPE, June 2020

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Cole', is positioned below the printed name and title.

SUMMARY

In October 2018, at its 45th session, the United Nations (UN) Committee on World Food Security (CFS) requested the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) to prepare a report that takes stock of its contributions in order to inform future CFS actions on food security and nutrition (FSN) for all in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The HLPE was specifically asked to outline a forward looking, a global narrative on FSN that draws on previous HLPE publications and considers recent developments in order to provide strategic guidance towards the achievement of the SDGs, especially SDG 2 (“Zero Hunger”). In responding to this request, this report articulates a global narrative that builds on what we know about the current situation with respect to FSN concepts, outcomes, drivers and critical policy directions that are vital for meeting SDG 2 targets and the entire 2030 Agenda.

Drawing on the findings of previous HLPE reports over the past decade, as well as the broader scientific literature, the key messages of this report are:

- 1** There is an urgent need for strengthening and consolidating conceptual thinking around FSN to prioritize the right to food, to widen our understanding of food security and to adopt a food systems analytical and policy framework.
- 2** FSN outcomes in recent years show the extent to which the global community is falling short on Agenda 2030 targets, especially SDG 2, while food systems face a range of challenges – and some opportunities – linked to major trends in the drivers of food system change.
- 3** Policy approaches and actions for FSN, in light of the diverse challenges facing food systems, will require critical policy shifts and support for enabling conditions that uphold all dimensions of food security.

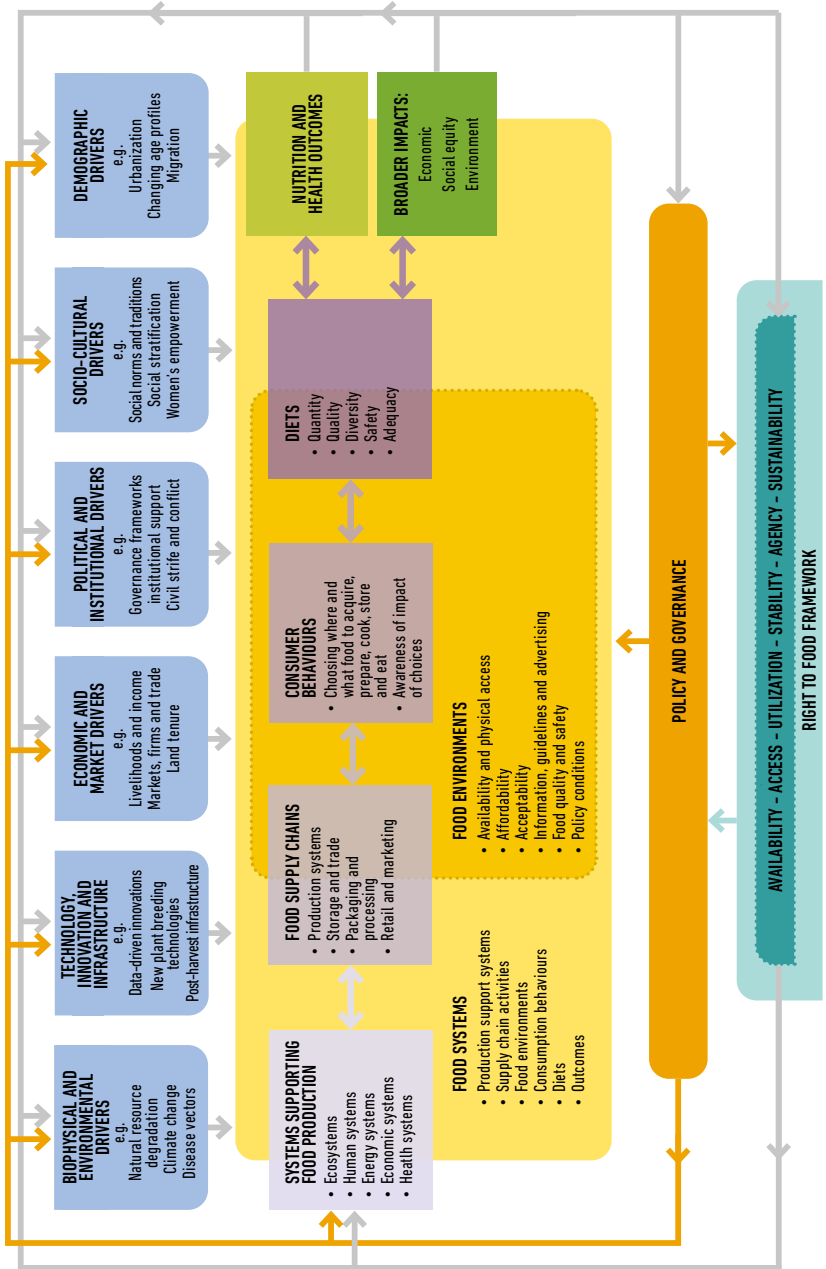
These points are illustrated with brief case studies that draw on a wide range of experiences and contexts.

The timing of this report is crucial. FSN indicators showed a lack of progress on meeting SDG 2 targets when work on this report began. The COVID-19 pandemic that emerged while preparing this report has only made the situation more critical. The impact of this crisis has been profound, revealing many aspects of food systems that require urgent rethinking and reform if we are to assure food security and the right to food for all.

UPDATING CONCEPTUAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

1. Articulating a global narrative on FSN requires prioritizing **the right to food** as a legal framework that is essential for ensuring food security and sustainable food systems. In recent years, a growing number of states have adopted legislation to enshrine the right to food, and progress has been made in many cases, but there remains much work to be done to achieve the full realization of this fundamental human right.
2. The **concept of food security has evolved** to recognize the centrality of agency and sustainability, along with the four other dimensions of availability, access, utilization and stability. These six dimensions of food security are reinforced in conceptual and legal understandings of the right to food.
3. **Agency** refers to the capacity of individuals or groups to make their own decisions about what foods they eat, what foods they produce, how that food is produced, processed and distributed within food systems, and their ability to engage in processes that shape food system policies and governance. **Sustainability** refers to the long-term ability of food systems to provide food security and nutrition in a way that does not compromise the economic, social and environmental bases that generate food security and nutrition for future generations.
4. Food security and nutrition policy is best approached **within a sustainable food system framework** (**FIGURE 1**) underpinned by the right to food. Food systems encompass the various elements and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, as well as the output of these

FIGURE 1
SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM FRAMEWORK



SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM HLPE 12, 2017

activities including socioeconomic and environmental outcomes. A food systems framework captures the complexity of the interrelationships of drivers of change at a broader scale with the functioning of food systems.

5. Sustainable food systems embody qualities that support the six dimensions of food security.

Sustainable food systems are: productive and prosperous (to ensure the availability of sufficient food); equitable and inclusive (to ensure access for all people to food and to livelihoods within that system); empowering and respectful (to ensure agency for all people and groups, including those who are the most vulnerable and marginalized to make choices and exercise voice in shaping that system); resilient (to ensure stability in the face of shocks and crises); regenerative (to ensure sustainability in all its dimensions); and healthy and nutritious (to ensure nutrient uptake and utilization).

- 6.** There have been **important shifts in policy approaches to food security and nutrition** that are informed by the evolving understandings of food security and food systems thinking, as outlined in past HLPE reports. Policies that embrace these shifts: i) support radical transformations of food systems; ii) appreciate food system complexity and interactions with other sectors and systems; iii) focus on a broader understanding of hunger and malnutrition; and iv) develop diverse policy solutions to address context-specific problems.
- 7.** The report articulates a **theory of change (FIGURE 2)** that the four critical policy shifts together, along with a stronger enabling environment, work to bring about more sustainable food systems that support the six dimensions of food security and ultimately support the realization of the right to food and the achievement of the SDGs, especially SDG 2.

CURRENT TRENDS, CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES IN FOOD SYSTEMS

- 8. Progress on SDG 2 has been uneven.** The number of people suffering from hunger in recent years has increased and the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated the situation. Different forms of malnutrition—including overweight, obesity and micronutrient deficiencies—are also expanding at alarming rates. Food environments in different contexts are deteriorating and food safety is an ongoing concern. Food system livelihoods also continue to be precarious for many of the world's most vulnerable and marginalized people. There are also enormous external costs to the way food systems currently operate.

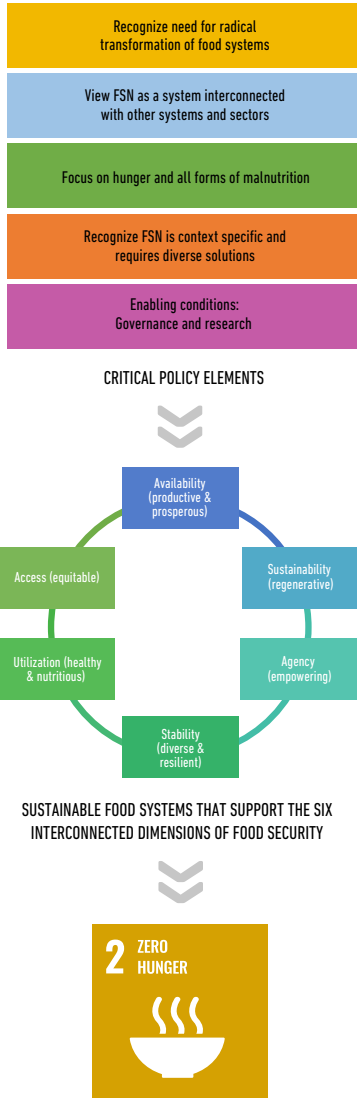


FIGURE 2
THEORY OF CHANGE

SOURCE: AUTHORS

9. Formulating **more effective FSN policy requires a deeper understanding of the underlying forces that drive food system change**. It is necessary to unpack the main trends, challenges and opportunities to improve FSN policies. There are many important trends in various types of food system drivers.
10. **Biophysical, environmental and disease trends**. Climate change is having profound effects on food systems, while food systems contribute to a changing climate. Food systems are also responsible for the accelerated pace of natural resource degradation at the same time that they are affected by it. Food safety risks, hazards, pests and emerging diseases—including COVID-19—have wide ranging impacts on food security.
11. **Technology, innovation and infrastructure trends**. Recent years have seen growing support for innovation for sustainable agricultural production methods—such as agroecology, sustainable intensification and climate-smart agriculture—although there are some controversies over which of these approaches should be applied in which contexts. Digital technologies create opportunities for efficiencies, while raising questions about data privacy. New plant breeding technologies, such as genome editing, are seen by some as an advancement over traditional agricultural biotechnology, while others are concerned about their environmental and social implications. Ongoing weaknesses and postharvest handling and storage infrastructure present serious challenges, including high levels of food loss and waste.
12. **Economic and market trends**. There has been both expansion and disruption in food and agriculture markets in recent decades and ongoing debates over the implications of international food trade for food security. Heightened concentration in recent decades has also reshaped agrifood supply chains in ways that enhance the power and influence of large corporations within food systems. Financial actors have also become increasingly engaged at various points in food systems, sparking debates about whether their activities are beneficial or destabilizing. Economic weaknesses have been exacerbated by the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, with negative consequences for food security. The shift in recent decades of a significant proportion of agricultural production and land use away from human food-related activities and towards animal feed, timber and biofuels has presented trade-offs between food security and energy needs. Limited access to land, resources and markets for small-scale producers has affected rural livelihoods.
13. **Political and institutional trends**. Weak and fragmented FSN governance has resulted in policy inertia at different scales that threaten progress. Public sector investment

in food and agriculture has declined, raising questions about the appropriate balance between the roles of the public and private sector in supporting food systems. Civil strife and conflict affect the food security of millions of people around the world.

14. **Socio-cultural trends.** Inequalities persist at all levels, with a negative impact on poverty reduction and food security, especially for the world's most vulnerable and marginalized people—including small-scale producers, women, youth, indigenous peoples and vulnerable food system workers. There has been slow progress on women's empowerment, which affects food security in important ways due to the multiple roles that women play in food systems.
15. **Demographic trends.** Population change will result in growing demand for food, although by how much will depend on consumer food choices and the ability to reduce food losses and waste. Urbanization patterns also influence food systems, particularly rural to urban migration and growing urban demand for easy-to-prepare and processed foods. Declining youth interest in agriculture presents enormous challenges for the future of food production and food system livelihoods.

POTENTIAL POLICY DIRECTIONS

16. The most promising policy directions are those that **embrace the four critical policy shifts** outlined in this report. Policies that follow these shifts are more likely to support the six dimensions of food security and strengthen food systems. At the same time, these policies enable food systems to mitigate threats and identify the opportunities that emerge from the trends in food system drivers.
17. Policies that promote **a radical transformation of food systems** need to be empowering, equitable, regenerative, productive, prosperous and must boldly reshape the underlying principles from production to consumption. These include stronger measures to promote equity among food system participants by promoting agency and the right to food, especially for vulnerable and marginalized people. Measures to ensure more sustainable practices, such as agroecology, also address climate change and ecosystem degradation. And measures to reshape food production and distribution networks, such as territorial markets, help to overcome economic and sociocultural challenges such as uneven trade, concentrated markets and persistent inequalities by supporting diverse and equitable markets that are more resilient.

18. Policies that appreciate the **interconnectedness of different systems and sectors** are required to ensure more regenerative, productive and resilient food systems. Improved coordination is needed across sectors and systems, such as approaches that ensure economic systems work in ways that support food systems. They also include policies that specifically address challenges at the intersection of food systems and ecosystems, which are foundational to food production. Initiatives and policies that build on lessons about inter-system connections from past crises, such as what is being learned about the COVID-19 pandemic, are also important to help make food systems more resilient in future crises.
19. Policies that address **hunger and all forms of malnutrition** require food systems that are equitable, empowering, sustainable, healthy and nutritious. Policies in this area support nutrition-driven agricultural production, food environments to encourage healthy diets and the availability of diverse, local fruits and vegetables. Fundamental to all nutrition improvements are policies on infant and child nutrition, including improving rates of exclusive breastfeeding up to six months of age. Measures that address specific forms of malnutrition are also important, especially for the most marginalized populations.
20. Policies that develop **context-specific solutions**, taking local conditions and knowledge into account, are necessary for more resilient, productive and empowering food systems. Measures must tackle the distinct challenges that arise in diverse types of rural and urban contexts, including support for small-scale farming systems as well as support for access to healthy foods in urban areas that link up with small-scale producers in rural areas. Unique challenges posed by conflicts are a key cause of hunger, requiring measures to support integrated food production in situations of unrest and in post-conflict areas.
21. **Effective governance** is necessary to support the critical policy shifts and to better enable FSN policies and initiatives to meet the SDGs, especially SDG 2. Effective governance includes a renewed commitment to multilateral cooperation and coordination, upholding established international obligations, enhanced coordination across sectors at different scales of government, as well as effective multi-stakeholder partnerships that support participation and representation, including the voices of marginalized and vulnerable groups.
22. It is important for states to **encourage and support a wide range of FSN research**, in particular on key critical and emerging issues as well as contentious areas. It is essential that these issues, including in the case of unforeseen crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, receive full research consideration with respect to

their impact on FSN policies and outcomes, especially their effects on the most marginalized and vulnerable groups.

CONCLUSION

23. It is vital that the global community **seize this moment to adopt new FSN frameworks** that widen our understanding of food security, that appreciate the complexity of food systems drivers and outcomes and embrace critical policy shifts that support all dimensions of food security, all of which are essential to upholding the right to food. These conceptual frameworks and policy shifts have been consistently emphasized by the HLPE but have been unevenly applied in practice. Given the weak performance with respect to SDG 2 and all SDGs as they relate to FSN to date, the time is past due for adopting of these frameworks and policy approaches in a consistent and coherent way across food systems and all food system actors.
24. The **urgent and worsening FSN situation due to the COVID-19 crisis makes these findings even more timely and relevant**. The crisis has been a wake-up call to address the multiple complex challenges facing food systems, and it demands measures to improve food systems to make them not only more resilient to crises, but also more equitable and inclusive, empowering and respectful, regenerative, healthy and nutritious, as well as productive and prosperous for all.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations, which emerge directly from the analysis presented in the report, are intended to help decision-makers as they develop concrete policies needed to support the realization of the right to food and to achieve the SDGs, and especially SDG 2. SDG 2 exhorts the global community to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030. The necessary transformations will involve a diversity of transitions, adapted to the conditions and challenges of different places and peoples, while also being cognizant of the broader structural conditions that bind locales together and condition local action.

The recommendations flow directly from the four critical policy shifts, plus the enabling conditions, as articulated in the report. These policy shifts and the enabling conditions that support them build upon and reinforce one another in complex ways. Together, they support efforts to bring about more sustainable food systems and help to address the main challenges facing food systems today.

1. UPHOLD THE CENTRAL ROLE OF THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS IN FSN

- a. States should take stronger actions to honour their obligations and duties to respect, protect and fulfil the right to food and protect agency. This affects all states in the world in a spirit of solidarity.
- b. Empower citizens as food system participants, especially women, indigenous people, migrant workers, displaced people and refugees and other vulnerable people and communities to exercise agency over their own livelihoods and ensure access to diverse, nutritious and safe food.
- c. Ensure that food systems are more equitable and work for the world's most marginalized producers, consumers and workers. The global private sector has a great responsibility here.
- d. Provide support services and social protection, including in crises and complex emergencies.
- e. The CFS should formally strengthen the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food, by moving from "progressive realization" to "unconditional realization."

2. URGENTLY BUILD MORE SUSTAINABLE, RESOURCE EFFICIENT AND RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS

- a. Implement a comprehensive transformation in the food system including food production, processing, distribution and consumption in order to address outstanding food security and nutrition challenges.
- b. Support transition to agroecology and other innovations for sustainable and resilient food production methods, to gradually overcome the overuse of natural resources for food production.
- c. Take measures to reduce food losses and waste by at least half, especially post-harvest losses in developing countries and consumer food waste in industrialized countries.
- d. Support diverse food production and distribution networks, including territorial market arrangements.
- e. Take responsible trade measures to maintain food price stability, especially in situations of public health and food emergencies.

3. STRENGTHEN THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF THE STATE IN FOOD SYSTEMS TO BETTER SUPPORT ALL SIX DIMENSIONS OF FOOD SECURITY

- a. Improve public investment in infrastructure for markets, storage and other necessary food system components to support deconcentration of production and distribution networks and bring more diversity for resilience.
- b. Invest in public good research to ensure equitable access to new technologies, inputs and services in food systems and agriculture.
- c. Strengthen national and regional strategic food reserves.
- d. Provide public training and support for small-scale and family farmers, especially in agroecological and sustainable production and marketing, and especially in rainfed and harsh environments.
- e. Ensure market access, both upstream and downstream, at remunerative prices for smallholder producers through government procurement programmes (e.g. public distribution and school feeding).

4. ENSURE INTEGRATION AND COORDINATION ACROSS MULTIPLE INTERCONNECTED SECTORS AND AT ALL LEVELS WHEN SETTING FSN POLICIES

- a. Take strong measures to immediately address wealth, income and social inequality, which has profound implications for FSN.
- b. Protect the essential ecosystem services that underpin sustainable food systems.

- c. Ensure food trade is equitable and fair for countries that depend on food imports, for agricultural exporting countries, for producers, including small-holders, and for consumers.
 - d. Improve policy coordination in all relevant sectors including, for example, agriculture, environment, economy, energy, trade and health to improve policy responses to issues such as food availability, malnutrition, food safety and disease.
 - e. Restrict the use of agricultural crops for non-food production (e.g. biofuel).
- 5. ACCELERATE ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURAL RESOURCE DEGRADATION AND NATURAL DISASTERS ON FOOD SYSTEMS**
- a. Promote and support adaptation to climate change to build resilience.
 - b. Take significant steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the food system in areas of the world where agricultural production contributes most to climate change.
 - c. Take measures to improve agricultural resilience against pests and diseases that may threaten the food supply and public health.
 - d. Take measures to protect existing and especially threatened agricultural biodiversity.
 - e. Encourage more sustainable agriculture in the most vulnerable ecosystems, including, for example, mountain and dryland environments, small island developing states and low-lying coastal areas.
 - f. Recognize increased water scarcity and take immediate measures to rationalize and optimize use of scarce water resources, as well as water management, in agriculture and food systems.
 - g. Develop and support more robust climate finance mechanisms that really work and target small-scale food producers (e.g. farmers, livestock keepers, fishers, food processors).
- 6. LEARN FROM THE FSN IMPACTS OF COVID-19 TO BUILD MORE ROBUST AND RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS**
- a. The CFS should take a lead role in coordinating the global food security policy guidance in response to COVID-19 and its aftermath.
 - b. Social protection mechanisms, including national and international food assistance, for the poorest and most vulnerable people during, and in the aftermath of, the COVID-19 pandemic, must incorporate provisions on the right to food, in terms of quantity and nutritional quality.

- c. When developing action plans for minimizing the impact of COVID-19, governments need to take into account the broader interactions with food security and nutrition.
- d. Support food supply chains and avoid disruptions in food movement and trade (including providing clear health and safety guidelines for food workers).
- e. Support local communities and citizens to increase local food production and consumption.
- f. Collect and share data, information and experiences on the status and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food systems and draw lessons learned.
- g. All relevant UN agencies must urgently develop a rapid response mechanism at global scales for food in order to support poor and vulnerable people.

7. SUPPORT HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES FROM SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

- a. Facilitate the supply of nutritionally diverse, minimally processed staple foods such as fresh, seasonal and local fruits and vegetables.
- b. Facilitate the supply of a culturally-acceptable, diverse basket of foods of both plant and animal origin to ensure sustainable diets (i.e. both healthy and environmentally sustainable).
- c. Facilitate biodiversity conservation through sustainable use by promoting the production and consumption of nutritionally-rich neglected and underutilized food species and local varieties.
- d. Provide incentives for improving the nutritional quality of processed foods and their promotion in food retail and advertising, as well as disincentives for non-adherence.
- e. Establish and/or improve nutrition and food system education at all levels and promote nutrition awareness campaigns to foster behaviour change.
- f. Create economic structures and support services to encourage and support better nutrition for pregnant and lactating women, exclusive breast-feeding for infants up to six months and complementary feeding of children up to two years.

8. ADDRESS MULTIPLE MANIFESTATIONS OF HUNGER, MALNUTRITION AND FOOD-RELATED DISEASES THROUGH COORDINATED, MULTISECTORAL POLICIES AND ACTIONS

- a. Reframe the right to food as freedom from hunger and all forms of malnutrition—underweight, overweight, obesity, micronutrient deficiencies and non-communicable diseases—reaffirming the importance of “safe and nutritious food” along with freedom from hunger.

- b. Reduce the prevalence of childhood undernutrition by addressing its direct (food insecurity) and indirect causes (hygiene, clean water, civil strife, unsafe food supply, etc.).
 - c. Promote food system solutions to address the pandemic of overweight and obesity.
 - d. The agriculture sector should engage the health and environment sectors in establishing policies and programmes that are nutrition-driven and environmentally sustainable.
 - e. The health sector should engage the agriculture and environment sectors in addressing overweight/obesity and malnutrition in all its forms, and risks associated with food-system-related chemical and microbial exposures.
 - f. Initiate and strengthen social protection programmes for vulnerable groups, such as school feeding programmes, that address the quality and quantity of foods and diets to prevent malnutrition in all its forms.
- 9. ADDRESS THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF DIVERSE RURAL AND URBAN CONTEXTS IN FORMULATING FSN POLICIES**
- a. Ensure more equitable access to land and productive agricultural resources for small-scale producers who remain vital providers of food and food security in much of the less industrialized world.
 - b. Encourage investment in rural infrastructure development, agricultural services and access to markets, in order to mitigate rural to urban migration.
 - c. Develop policies that are targeted to helping people living in poverty in rural and urban areas to access nutritious food and healthier food environments.
 - d. Ensure that FSN policies and programmes connect growing rural and urban food needs, including in small- and medium-size towns, to sustainable livelihoods in the countryside that appeal to young people.
 - e. Support private and public sector investment in, and state-facilitated development of, peri-urban and urban agriculture in order to bring fresh foods, especially perishable horticultural products that are rich in micronutrients, closer to markets.
- 10. ADDRESS THE FSN NEEDS OF THOSE AFFECTED BY CONFLICTS**
- a. Provide timely, adequate and nutritious emergency food relief for people affected by conflicts, including displaced people.
 - b. Ensure the availability of clean and adequate water and sanitation to facilitate food production, preparation and utilization in conflict and post-conflict situations.

- c. As emergency relief is phased out, rebuild the conditions to have normal functioning food systems in post conflict situations.
- d. Revitalize development and governance capacity and expertise in areas relevant to sustainable FSN during conflict and in post-conflict situations.

11. IMPROVE FSN GOVERNANCE AT DIFFERENT SCALES

- a. Enhance FSN governance and coordination at the global level to strengthen and renew commitment to multilateral cooperation. In particular:
 - National governments need to implement existing CFS and other UN guidelines related to FSN governance.
 - CFS and its member states should consider making their commitments legally binding through an appropriate multilateral agreement.
 - A financial mechanism supplemented by public and private contributions should be established to support the proposed multilateral agreement and the implementation of national FSN strategies and policies.
- b. National governments should support existing efforts to ensure representative participation in FSN governance, e.g. creating or strengthening participatory and inclusive FSN national committees.
- c. CFS and states need to collect and report data on the implementation of food system policies and initiatives at different scales (local, national, international) and develop systems for auditing and accountability.

12. ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT MORE RESEARCH ON FSN, KEY EMERGING ISSUES AND CONTENTIOUS AREAS

- a. Encourage the development of a global initiative to model the global food system to predict future shocks and to forecast the likely impact of different solution pathways for sustainable food systems.
- b. Assess knowledge gaps and research needs to address various challenges to inform policies to achieve food system transformation, such as the interconnectedness of food systems with all relevant sectors and systems.
- c. Develop a better understanding with enhanced research into critical and emerging issues that affect all six dimensions of food security.
- d. Strike an appropriate balance in food systems research between public and private sectors, including participatory research programmes that incorporate traditional knowledge.

The global community is falling short on Agenda 2030's sustainable development goals (SDG), especially on ending hunger and malnutrition in all its forms (SDG 2). The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed and exacerbated the challenges that food systems were already facing and made it obvious that urgent and radical reforms are needed to guarantee the fundamental human right to adequate food for all. In this bold and forward-looking report, the HLPE's Steering Committee sets out an analytical and conceptual framework and suggests strategic orientations for a radical transformation of food systems. The report calls for agency and sustainability to be elevated as essential dimensions of food security and nutrition (FSN), together with availability, access, utilization and stability.

Concrete solutions to ensure the right to food will require major policy shifts to make this radical transformation of food systems possible, according to different contexts, while acknowledging the complexity of their interactions with other sectors and understanding better the drivers of hunger and malnutrition. As a decisive Food Systems Summit will gather the world's heads of state and governments in 2021, it is vital that the global community seize this moment to adopt new food system frameworks, which will not only be more resilient to crises, but also more equitable and inclusive, empowering and respectful, regenerative, healthy and nutritious, as well as productive and prosperous for all. This radical transformation is urgently needed in order to eradicate hunger and all forms of malnutrition as a fundamental part of achieving all SDGs.