Economic growth is necessary but not sufficient to accelerate reduction of hunger and malnutrition

The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2012 presents new estimates of undernourishment based on a revised and improved methodology. The new estimates show that progress in reducing hunger during the past 20 years has been better than previously believed, and that, given renewed efforts, it may be possible to reach the MDG hunger target at the global level by 2015. However, the number of people suffering from chronic undernourishment is still unacceptably high, and eradication of hunger remains a major global challenge.

This year's report also discusses the role of economic growth in reducing undernourishment. Economic growth is most effective in reducing poverty and hunger when it increases employment and income earning opportunities that the poor can take advantage of. Sustainable agricultural growth is often effective in reducing poverty and hunger because it provides new employment opportunities for the poor and increases their access to food. Growth becomes particularly powerful when it raises an agricultural sector that provides a valued agricultural product for a significant part of the market. However, growth will not necessarily result in better nutrition for all. Policies and programmes that will ensure “nutrition-sensitive” growth include supporting increased dietary diversity, improving access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and health services, and educating consumers regarding appropriate child feeding practices.

Economic growth takes time to reach the poor, and may not reduce the level of dietary threats. Therefore, social protection is crucial for reducing hunger as quickly as possible. Furthermore, when poverty is structural, social protection also promotes economic growth by building human capital and helping farmers manage risk so that they can adopt improved technologies. Finally, rapid progress in reducing hunger requires government action to provide key public goods and services within a governance system based on transparency, participation, accountability, rule of law and human rights.
Incentives and opportunities for growth should be ‘traded’ rapidly. Growth needs to be under-
taken to support the future demand for food-
net output; through opportunities for the
growth of the demand-side, investment in safe-
nutrition, and promoting the sustainable use of
natural resources, notably in rural and urban
areas. Agricultural issues are inter-related
and need to be considered together.

Food security is a social and economic
right. The right to food is fundamental to
human rights, including human dignity,
health and development. Food security is
eliminable and must be achieved by all
people and nations at all times.

Food and agriculture growth needs to be
innovative. Investment in research and
development is essential to address the
challenges of feeding the world in the
future. The recent surge in agricultural
prices and food insecurity have increased
the urgency for urgent solutions.

Agricultural growth needs to be environ-
mentally sustainable. Growth should not
be at the expense of the environment. The
world’s limited resources are the basis for
sustainable growth.

Agricultural growth needs to be inclusive.
Growth should not be at the expense of the
poor. Growth needs to be pro-poor.

Agriculture has a role to play in reducing
poverty. Growth is one of the key tools for
reducing poverty. Growth is necessary for
reducing poverty, but it is not sufficient.

Agricultural growth needs to be sustain-
able. The world needs to move towards
sustainable agriculture. The world is facing
a food security crisis, but it can be
solved.

Agricultural growth needs to be equitable.
Growth needs to be shared by all.

Agricultural growth needs to be participa-
tory. The participation of farmers in
agricultural growth needs to be encour-
gaged. The participation of farmers in
growth needs to be encouraged. The
participation of farmers in growth needs
to be encouraged.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
sustainable. Growth needs to be
sustainable.

Agricultural growth needs to be
inclusive. Growth needs to be
inclusive.

Agricultural growth needs to be
environmentally sustainable. Growth
needs to be environmentally sustainable.
Growth needs to be environmentally
sustainable.
The State of

Food Insecurity in the World

Economic growth is necessary but not sufficient to accelerate reduction of hunger and malnutrition

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 2012
**Required citation:**
Economic growth is necessary but not sufficient to accelerate reduction of hunger and malnutrition. Rome, FAO.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Foreword</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Undernourishment around the world in 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Undernourishment around the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Improvements in data and methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Economic growth, hunger and malnutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Income growth and changes in food consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>How does economic growth contribute to hunger reduction and improved nutrition?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Nutrition outcomes – global progress, but many problems remain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Contribution of agricultural growth to reduction of poverty, hunger and malnutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>The role of agricultural growth in economic growth, and poverty and hunger reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Smallholders’ contribution to increasing agricultural production and productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Hunger, agriculture and sustainable development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>The importance of the rural non-farm economy and its links with agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Social protection for the poor and vulnerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>A foundation for reducing hunger and malnutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Safety nets to improve food security and nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Social protection and economic growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Technical annex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Annex 1: Prevalence of undernourishment and progress towards the World Food Summit (WFS) and the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets in developing countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Annex 2: Updating and overhauling the FAO methodology for assessing food insecurity – a summary of changes and their impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Annex 3: Glossary of selected terms used in the report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>