



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



STRENGTHENING SECTOR POLICIES FOR BETTER FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION RESULTS

**Policy
Guidance
Series**

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This policy guidance note is part of a series that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Directorate for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) of the European Commission and partners are producing to support policy makers address the food security and nutrition situation in their country. Each note provides guidance on how to sharpen the focus of sector policies in order to achieve sustainable food security and nutrition outcomes.

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Foreword

In 2000, leaders worldwide adopted the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which included the target to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. At the end of 2015, the prevalence of hunger had globally declined from 15 percent in 2000-2002 to 11 percent in 2014-2016. As the MDGs expired, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including a far more ambitious and broader goal aimed at ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture by 2030 (SDG 2). This commitment to universal access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food at all times of the year, requires sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices, equal access of men and women to land, technology and markets, and investments in infrastructure and technology to boost agricultural productivity. The achievement of this goal is closely linked to the achievement of SDG 1, which aims to end poverty in all its forms everywhere. To achieve SDG 1, there is need to ensure social protection for the poor and vulnerable, increase access to basic services and support people who are negatively affected by climate change and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.

The MDG experience shows that under a scenario where current trends continue, the twin goals of ending hunger and poverty by 2030 will not be achieved. To achieve these goals, greater focus is needed in policies and programmes on explicit and measurable food security and nutrition

objectives, combined with a significant increase in resource allocation and investment, and intensified dialogue and collaboration across the different sectors, stakeholders and development partners that are relevant to these common goals.

It is in this context that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the European Union (EU) have joined forces to support governments and their development partners in creating a policy and institutional environment that is conducive to achieving SDG 1 and 2 by implementing the “Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation” (FIRST) programme. The FIRST programme strengthens partnership at country level among the Government, the EU Delegation, the FAO Representation and other partners around the development and implementation of a coherent set of policies, programmes and investment plans that support the achievement of SDGs 1 and 2. To this end, the FIRST programme supports a variety of activities, including:

- reviewing the existing national policy and institutional frameworks for food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture;
- identifying bottlenecks and opportunities for improving policy and programme impact;
- advocating for and developing human and organizational capacities for food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture;
- facilitating evidence-based and inclusive policy dialogue and stakeholder coordination;
- promoting more investment and improving resource allocation in line with the priorities spelled out in the national policies.

In support of the FIRST Programme, FAO together with the EU has developed a set of policy guidance notes to improve the coherence and the contribution of national policy frameworks towards the achievement of SDGs 1 and 2. Each of the guidance notes analyses a specific policy domain or sector and outlines the policy options for improving impact on food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture. The guidance notes illustrate the application of policy options through case studies and also outline:

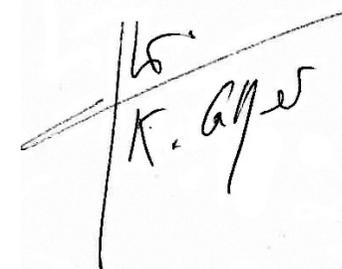
- gaps in data, information and analysis on the contributions that different sectors make to food security, nutrition, and sustainable agriculture;
- implications in the short, medium and long terms of various policy options;
- trade-offs between short-term and long-term objectives, between the needs and demands of different stakeholder groups, and between domestic priorities and international obligations;
- issues that pertain to governance and stakeholder dialogue around specific policy issues and processes;
- issues of political economy in terms of the actions and interactions among various stakeholders, coalitions and networks that are involved in specific policy processes, each with their own agendas, interests, values, beliefs, relationships, political power, knowledge and capacities.

It is expected that the guidance notes will support FAO and EU policy officers and their partners in their efforts to promote inclusive and evidence-based stakeholder dialogue and in the development of capacities to improve the enabling environment for food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture.



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The preparation of these guidance notes involved many people from several units in FAO and a variety of partner organizations. Many individuals played a leading role as a main author or contributor in the preparation of the notes. They are as follows:

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Acronyms and abbreviations

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ASF	Animal source foods
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFS	Committee for Food Security
CSA	Climate-smart agriculture
DALYs	Disability-adjusted life-years
DEVCO	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
DFID	Department for International Development UK
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FSN	Food Security and Nutrition
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HLPE	High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition
ICN2	Second International Conference on Nutrition
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISPA	Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment
LDS	Livestock sector Development Strategy
LIC	Low Income Country

MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MIC	Middle Income Country
NCDs	Non-communicable diseases
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NWFPs	Non-wood forest products
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PEA	Political economy analysis
PFP	Public Food Procurement
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SP	Social Protection
SOFA	The State of Food and Agriculture
SUN	Scaling-Up Nutrition
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VGGT	Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security
VGSSF	Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

This introductory note provides the background to the policy guidelines and comprises three sections. Section 1 describes the

rationale of the guidelines; Section 2 introduces the different guidance notes included in the guidelines and describes the step-wise approach adopted; Section 3 unpacks the concepts related to food security, nutrition and policy.



Key messages

- The eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms, including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and problems of overweight, obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases, requires that relevant state and non-state actors implement a coherent set of actions in a coordinated manner on a number of fronts, including on:
 - Poverty, inequality and inadequate access to productive assets and decent employment as the main and persistent drivers of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition;
 - The impact that emerging trends and challenges have on food and agricultural systems, including the impacts of climate change, urbanization, changing dietary patterns and lifestyles, changes in demographic structures, continued rapid population growth in a number of resource-constrained countries and heightened competition over natural resources.

- The purpose of this set of guidance notes is to provide policy-makers and those involved in supporting policy change processes, with an analysis and illustrations of how:
 - Policies that pertain to specific sectors and policy domains can have a direct and/or indirect impact on the immediate and underlying causes of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition;
 - Specific changes within a particular policy or a synergistic set of changes across a set of policy domains can help improve impact and accelerate progress in eradicating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition;
 - More inclusive stakeholder dialogue and coordination can help improve policy coherence, reduce conflicts, manage trade-offs and create synergies in order to better align sector- or domain-specific policy objectives with the overarching goal of eradicating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition;
 - To identify windows of opportunity for policy change and become more effective at influencing the policy agenda in support of the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

Section 1

Rationale of the guidelines

Current status of food insecurity and malnutrition

Significant progress in reducing undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies has been made over the past two decades. Nevertheless, this progress has been uneven across regions, countries and population groups. To date, 795 million people still suffer from chronic hunger, 156 million children under the age of five remain chronically undernourished and over two billion people are affected by micronutrient deficiencies. Of the world's disease burden, maternal and child undernutrition comprise more than 10 percent. Among children under five years old, undernutrition is a major contributor to about three million deaths per year (IFPRI, 2014; WHO, 2016). At the same time, prevalence of overweight and obesity is increasing in nearly all countries and is a growing concern worldwide. Changes in dietary patterns and the adoption of more sedentary lifestyles have contributed to a staggering 1.9 billion people being overweight and 600 million obese, which heighten the risk of diet-related non-communicable diseases, including Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, stroke and several cancers. Globally, 44 percent of diabetes, 23 percent of ischaemic heart disease and between 7 and 41 percent of certain cancers are attributable to overweight and obesity, and annually an estimated 2.8 million people (mainly adults) die due to ill health associated with being obese (WHO, 2016). Currently, the number of adults classified as obese outweighs the number of underweight adults, and obesity among children has been rising – from 4.8 percent in 1990 to 6.1 percent in 2014. If current trends persist, an estimated 11 percent of children under the age of five may be obese by 2025 (WHO, 2016).

Tackling the triple burden of malnutrition

Today's nutrition challenges are complex, and no country is immune to the effects of at least one form of malnutrition, be it chronic or acute undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, or the rising problem of overweight and obesity (Global Panel, 2016). Each of these problems has significant implications for individuals and economies. Beyond the ethical dimensions of the problem, the human, social and economic costs to society at large are enormous: lost investments in human capital due to preventable child deaths and premature adult mortality linked to diet-related non-communicable diseases; health-related problems and associated care costs; comprised adult labour productivity; lost income due to illness; and impaired learning potential and poor school performance (*ibid*). The economic burden of undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight to the global economy is large. Recent assessments suggest that the estimated impact of malnutrition in all its forms could be as high as USD 3.5 trillion a year or USD 5000 per individual (FAO, 2013; Global Panel, 2016).

While the costs of malnutrition in all its forms to the economy are substantial, the economic returns to investing in nutrition are very high and far outweigh their costs (Box 1). On average, the economic gains from investments aimed at tackling most forms of undernutrition yield a benefit-cost ratio of 15; i.e. USD 1 invested in a bundle of evidence-based interventions for nutrition generates average returns of USD 15 (Hoddinott *et al.*, 2012). Such investments include nutrition-specific interventions with proven effectiveness and relate to behaviour change communication, provision of micronutrients and complementary/ supplementary and therapeutic feeding interventions.

However, nutrition-specific interventions, when effectively implemented at scale will only contribute to reducing stunting and micronutrient deficiencies by an estimated 20 percent in the coming decades (Bhutta, Z. *et al.*, 2013; Global Panel, 2016). Hence, to meet the various nutrition targets (Box 2), policy makers will have to combine nutrition-specific interventions with effective actions in other key sectors that address the underlying and basic causes.

Box 1

Examples of economic returns to investing in good nutrition

- FAO calculated that an annual investment of USD 1.2 billion in improving the micronutrient supply globally through supplementation, food fortification and/or biofortification of staple crops would result in *“better health, fewer deaths and increased future earnings”* of up to USD 15.3 billion per year (FAO, 2103).
- According to calculations of the World Bank, an annual investment of USD 7 billion (in addition to existing resource allocations) over the next ten years would result in saving the lives of 3.7 million children, a reduction of 65 million children being stunted, and 265 million fewer women suffering from anaemia compared to 2015 (World Bank, 2015).
- Following the *“Cost of Hunger”* analysis for 12 countries in Africa, the average annual savings from halving child stunting by 2025 amounted to USD 3 million per year for Swaziland, to USD 133 million for Egypt and as high as USD 376 million for Ethiopia as a result of decreases in medical treatments, lower repetition rates in the education system and increases in productivity and subsequently in national savings (UNECA, 2014).
- According to projections on reducing obesity in the United States, rising federal tax revenues combined with reduced public health spending on obesity-related treatment would exceed USD 20 billion per year by 2035 (Miller *et al.*, 2015).

Source: adapted from Global Panel (2016). The cost of malnutrition. Why policy action is urgent. London, UK: Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition.

Box 2

Global nutrition targets and the Sustainable Development Goals

World Health Assembly

In 2012, the World Health Assembly endorsed a comprehensive implementation plan on maternal, infant and young child nutrition, which specified a set of six global nutrition targets that by 2025 aim to:

- achieve a 40 percent reduction in the number of children under five who are stunted;
- achieve a 50 percent reduction in anaemia among women of reproductive age;
- achieve a 30 percent reduction in low birth weight;
- ensure that there is no increase in childhood overweight;
- increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months up to at least 50 percent;
- reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5 percent.

Sustainable Development Goals

In September 2014, the UN General Assembly approved the Report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the main basis for integrating the SDGs into the post-2015 development agenda. Of the recommended 17 SDGs, SDG 2 (*“End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture”*) contains direct provision for nutrition. Target 2.2 is directly related to malnutrition: *“By 2030 end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving by 2025 the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under five years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women, and older persons.”*

Different sectors, including agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, environment, health, trade, education and social welfare, contribute to food security and nutrition in multiple ways. Generally, food security and nutrition concerns are not sufficiently factored into the policies and decision-making of these sectors. Each of these sectors pursues its own objectives, which may not always be in harmony with food security and nutrition concerns. There is a need to align policies that impact nutrition across different government ministries and integrate nutrition as a key objective in relevant sector policies (EU, 2013).

Facilitating policy coherence and promoting nutrition sensitivity across a range of sectors and policy domains was reinforced at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) and is at the centre of nutrition strategies and approaches of key players, such as the EU, FAO, and the SUN Movement (Box 3). For example, the Rome Declaration on Nutrition adopted at the ICN2 acknowledges the multiple challenges of malnutrition to inclusive and sustainable development and to health and sets out a common vision for global action to end all forms of malnutrition. It calls for the need for coherent and cross-cutting policies to ensure that actions aiming at sectoral goals and by different stakeholders address the immediate and underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition and are well coordinated, leading to tangible results. This means that food security and nutrition objectives should be factored into countries' relevant sector policies and programmes and that, collectively, they contribute to a greater achievement of food security and nutrition outcomes rather than undermine them.

Towards a more coherent and cross-sectoral policy framework for food security and nutrition

Under a “business as usual” scenario, the Sustainable Development Goal to end hunger by 2030 (SDG2) will not be achieved and large segments of the world's population, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, will remain undernourished by 2030 and even by 2050. Similarly, global trends in the

prevalence and number of children affected by stunting are decreasing but not fast enough, particularly in Africa, in order to attain the World Health Assembly's global nutrition target of a 40 percent reduction in the number of stunted children by 2025.

In order to meet SDG2, it is imperative that governments and their development partners adopt and implement a coherent set of measures that will increase investment and accelerate action towards addressing:

- the immediate and underlying causes that keep the hungry, food-insecure and malnourished trapped in a vicious cycle of chronic deprivation, and;
- emerging trends and challenges in order to ensure that food and agricultural systems provide consumers with access to sustainable and safe supplies of a diverse range of nutritious and affordable foods, and with consumer information, based on scientific evidence, to support healthy diets.

Addressing immediate and underlying causes of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition – Policy-makers should focus on addressing the main drivers of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, i.e. poverty, inequality and constrained access to productive assets and decent employment. They can do this by ensuring that policies and programmes that cover sectors and policy domains that are crucial for the livelihoods of the poor and that are essential to meet growing demand for food take into consideration food security and nutrition concerns and include explicit food security and nutrition objectives.

Depending on the country-specific context, the sectors and policy domains that are most critical to this end are: agriculture; fisheries and aquaculture; livestock; forestry; and land tenure. Nutrition-sensitive social protection policies and programmes, where appropriate, combined with public procurement and school food and nutrition programmes can also play an important role in terms of addressing problems of availability of and access to food, while at the same time ensuring that children are well fed and educated about good nutrition and health.

Box 3

EU and FAO's response to all forms of malnutrition

The EU has committed to support partner countries in reducing stunting by at least seven million people by 2025, corresponding to 10 percent of the World Health Assembly target. Around this objective the EU has built its nutrition policy framework *"Enhancing Maternal and Child Nutrition in external assistance: an EU policy framework"*, which is operationalised through an Action Plan.

Strategic priority 1

Enhance mobilization and political commitment for nutrition

At the national level, the EU works in close collaboration with the SUN Movement to encourage political commitment, mobilize resources and ensure greater coherence among donors and overall international support for the reduction of maternal and child undernutrition. At the international level, the EU engages with relevant processes to work towards greater harmonization and coherence, and a more effective international response, including the G8/G20, the World Health Assembly, the Committee on World Food Security, the SUN Movement, the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition, the Food Assistance Committee and the humanitarian cluster system.

Strategic priority 2

Scale up actions at the country level

In particular, the EU focuses on the following three priority areas:

- **Strengthening human and institutional/system capacity:** supporting the development of national policy frameworks (inclusion of nutrition objectives, targets, indicators and budget implications); strengthening multi-sector and multi-actor coordination mechanisms to facilitate information-sharing, dialogue and joint planning; and enhancing strategic and managerial capacities within relevant bodies as well as technical capacities for nutrition among humanitarian and development actors in key sectors.
- **Increasing interventions specifically designed for nutrition in humanitarian and development settings, including:** behaviour change communication; provision of micronutrients and deworming interventions; and complementary/supplementary and therapeutic feeding interventions.
- **Increasing nutrition-sensitive actions in humanitarian and development settings:** addressing the underlying and basic causes of undernutrition, e.g. by factoring in nutrition systematically in the situation analysis and when deciding upon sector strategies, actions and targeting criteria; including nutrition-relevant indicators in the monitoring framework; and incorporating measures that strengthen the economic power of households and women, safeguarding women's ability to care for young children.

(cont.)

Box 3 (cont.)

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Strategic priority 3**Knowledge for nutrition (strengthening the expertise and the knowledge base)**

This involves strengthening the information base for decision-making and includes applied research to expand the evidence-base on the efficiency and effectiveness of various actions to inform policy development and the design of interventions and to broaden response options in various key sectors.

FAO's nutrition strategy seeks to improve diets and raise levels of nutrition through a people-centered approach. The strategy recognizes that combatting malnutrition in a sustainable way requires a holistic approach, i.e. bringing the potential of food and agricultural systems to bear on the problem, and joining with those working on health and care. The focus of the strategy is on maximizing the impact on nutrition of countries' food and agricultural systems by achieving three outcomes:

Outcome 1**Increased knowledge and evidence to maximize the impact of food and agricultural systems on nutrition**

The priority area includes meeting global knowledge demands for decision-making by creating, sharing and promoting the use of global public goods

(e.g. databases on basic food and nutrition data and methods, food-based indicators, tools, guidelines and curricula) and ensuring uptake of knowledge among policy-makers and other stakeholders at global, regional and national levels.

Outcome 2**Improved food and agricultural systems' governance for nutrition**

To shape more inclusive, participatory and evidence-based systems of governance for food and nutrition security, FAO will work with partners to build or strengthen institutional platforms for planning, coordination and alignment, and mechanisms for stakeholder accountability, such as joint results frameworks and common monitoring and reporting systems. FAO also supports empowering processes to place nutrition on the policy agenda and to enable people, in particular the most vulnerable, to participate in and influence the decisions that affect their lives.

Outcome 3**Strengthened national, regional and local capacities to formulate and implement policies and programmes to improve nutritional status**

FAO will work to strengthen countries' capacities to evaluate and monitor nutrition situations, analyse options, and implement agricultural policies and programmes that impact positively on nutrition.

Source: EU (2013). Enhancing Maternal and Child Nutrition in External Assistance: an EU Policy Framework. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. European Commission, Brussels; FAO (2014). Strategy and vision for FAO's work in nutrition. Food and Agriculture Organization, Rome.

Addressing emerging trends and challenges – Policy-makers will also need to address the impact that emerging trends and challenges have on food systems and consumers. Often they add complexity and carry the risk of reversing progress. But when well managed, they may also offer opportunities for improvement. In terms of their main impact on food security and nutrition, the emerging trends and challenges fall into three broad categories, namely: (i) changes in demographic structures and pressures from population growth, especially in resource-constrained countries that have high population growth rates; (ii) urbanization, changing lifestyles and consumption patterns; and (iii) climate change and natural resource competition.

- **Demographic changes and pressures:** as the world population continues to grow, food systems need to keep pace with the increasing demand for food and respond in a nutrition- and health-sensitive manner to changing dietary patterns. Policy frameworks therefore need to provide incentives in support of: (i) research, development and dissemination of technologies and practices to sustainably increase production in a context of natural resource constraints while safeguarding livelihoods and food security; and (ii) responsible investments, including by the private sector, to make food supply chains more efficient, resilient and at the same time responsive to consumers' needs in ways that increase people's access, especially by poor and vulnerable people, to a food basket that is culturally acceptable, affordable, nutritious, safe and healthy.
- **Urbanization, changing lifestyles and consumption patterns:** rapid urbanization, globalization, increasing income and associated changes in lifestyles have resulted in patterns of food consumption and physical activity that can be detrimental to nutrition and health. The trend, especially in middle-income countries and urban settings, is towards more sedentary lifestyles and the consumption of relatively cheap and highly processed convenience foods, rich in dietary energy but otherwise nutritionally poor. Hence there is also the need to look at factors in the policy framework

that affect consumer behaviours and lifestyles and that may play a role in preventing overweight, obesity and the resulting soaring morbidity. There is also a risk of food-borne diseases, associated with the practice of consumption of street foods and eating out in urban areas. Moreover, as urban consumers depend on increasingly long-distant markets and trade to access food, there may be a need to upgrade often neglected domestic food control infrastructures and systems to protect consumers from practices that negatively affect food quality and safety. Policy frameworks will therefore need to ensure that all food, irrespective of its source, is safe. Large-scale retailers, supermarkets and some processors have taken on a lead role in managing increasingly integrated food supply chains. With their large budgets for marketing and advertising, they often exert enormous influence over consumer attitudes and behaviours *vis à vis* nutrition and health. Similarly, because of the sheer size of their operations, their purchasing policies and practices can have a significant negative impact on family farmers, particularly where services to support family farmers and the infrastructure to connect them to urban areas are not well developed. There is a clear role for public sector policies and regulations to ensure that private sector policies and practices do not harm, and actually promote, food security, good nutrition and health.

- **Climate change and competition for natural resources:** in a context of increasing demand for food and water, and competition for natural resources, especially in resource-constrained environments, climate change may accelerate the process through which the rural poor are being dispossessed of the limited natural resources upon which they base their livelihoods. Moreover, limited access to social protection among the rural poor may force communities to resort to negative coping strategies that would impact their livelihoods, as well as nutrition, including selling off their productive assets, or diminishing the quality and diversity of food intake, particularly among children and women.

As a consequence the prevalence and severity of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition may increase in the affected communities. Therefore, climate change and natural resource management policies are increasingly important because of the direct and increasingly significant impact that climate change has on food security and nutrition. Such policies can influence agricultural production, with consequences especially in terms of production location, production volumes, food prices, nutritional quality and food safety.

The process of dispossession also contributes to increased domestic and international migration. Depending on the context, migration may have both positive and negative impacts on food security and nutrition. For example, while the inflow of remittances may have positive impacts on food security, there is evidence that increased access to and consumption of energy-dense food and transfer of unhealthy dietary habits from recipient communities where migrants settle may promote similar unhealthy dietary habits in the communities where migrants originate.

Purpose of the guidelines

The above analysis illustrates how policies of different sectors and policy domains can affect, on their own or in combination, the drivers of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms. The purpose of these guidelines is to deepen this analysis and illustrate, with case examples, how policy change within and/or across one or more of these sectors and/or policy domains can help to improve and accelerate positive impact.

Using a stepwise approach, the guidelines are structured around a set of guidance notes covering specific sectors and policy domains (Box 4). Each note provides answers to a core set of questions, illustrated by various country cases:

- How can the policy instruments that govern the sector or policy domain better address food security and nutrition constraints in the short and

longer terms? What policy changes (or complementary policies) are needed and how can they be affected?

- What are the conflicts and complementarities between the sector/domain-specific objectives and the food security and nutrition objectives? What change is needed to reduce conflicts and strengthen synergies among policies and programmes?
- What is the best way to contribute to the policy agenda in order to improve its focus on food security and nutrition goals, resolve trade-offs and conflicts within and across sector and domain-specific policies, and exploit synergies with other policies and instruments for greater impact on food security and nutrition outcomes?

Box 4

Policy guidance notes included in the guidelines

1 | FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

2 | LIVESTOCK

3 | FORESTRY

4 | SOCIAL PROTECTION

5 | CLIMATE CHANGE

6 | GENDER EQUALITY

7 | LAND TENURE

8 | POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS

Section 2

Content and structure of the guidelines

These guidelines should be regarded as a working document; over time additional sectors or policy domains might be added and country cases included. The current version of the guidelines comprises the following policy guidance notes:

1 FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

Fisheries and aquaculture play a crucial role for food security and nutrition, directly by providing healthy and highly nutritional food and indirectly by providing income. Increasingly, the sector is being threatened by many challenges – such as increased global demand for fish, competition over water and coastal areas, over-exploitation of resources, pollution, destruction of habitat, and impacts of climate change – that jeopardize the livelihoods of those involved in the sector, as well as the food security and nutrition situation of consumers.

The policy agenda of the sector tends to be oriented towards commercial interests. Often, food security, nutrition and livelihoods concerns are not well factored into fisheries-related policy measures due to the overall lack of knowledge about their linkages as well as poor coordination across the respective policy domains. The fisheries and aquaculture guidance note identifies a range of issues to be taken into account when attempting to harmonize fisheries policies with food security and nutrition concerns.

2 LIVESTOCK

The livestock sector can increase the availability of edible animal products like meat, milk and eggs and enhance access to food through sale of animal products and employment. It also contributes to food and nutrition security by improving the availability of crop-based foods (by providing traction and

dung from livestock). The sector has expanded dramatically over the last decades due to an increase in the aggregate and per capita consumption of meat, milk and eggs. The resulting growth has been accompanied by adverse consequences and public concerns, including environmental damage, high contribution to global warming, adverse human health impacts from excessive consumption, heightened risk of zoonotic and food-borne diseases, decline in livestock genetic diversity, biodiversity loss, animal welfare concerns and food fraud scandals. Perhaps most important are the growing concerns about how smallholder livestock producers can share in the economic benefits deriving from increased demand, especially since the rapid growth of the sector has been mainly driven by private investors, with little public sector oversight. Consequently, policy-makers nowadays are challenged by the need to balance the expansion and transformation of the sector, which is driven by the private sector, with public policy attention to enhance the sector's contribution to food security and nutrition while addressing concerns related to the environment and animal and human health. The livestock guidance note aims to support livestock and non-livestock experts in facilitating policy dialogue on ways to sharpen the focus of livestock policies and (price and non-price) regulations on food security and nutrition.

3 FORESTRY

Forests have the potential to enhance their contribution to food security and nutrition in a number of ways, both directly and indirectly. Forests provide: a source of food through wild foods and forest-based agricultural systems; income and employment; woodfuel for cooking; and ecosystem services essential to support agricultural and fishery production. Despite this potential, most often the existing forestry policies do not consider their relevance to sustainable food security and nutrition. Lack of inter-sectoral coordination across all relevant sectors (e.g. forestry, agriculture, environment, energy, mining, health, nutrition) can have negative impacts on sustainable

forest management, and consequently on food security and nutrition. To date, food security and nutrition have received little attention in national forestry policies and related policy measures. Forestry discussions are often geared towards tackling issues of forest management and economic efficiency and tend to neglect issues related to the impact of forestry on food security, nutrition and people's livelihoods. At the same time, conversion of forests to other land uses is usually justified on an economic basis, with insufficient attention to the long-term environmental and livelihood impacts on local people. This guidance note aims to help facilitate dialogue among policy-makers with a view to sharpening the focus of national forest-relevant policy instruments for improved food security and nutrition outcomes. The note's main purpose is to help stakeholders contribute to the forestry-related policy agenda for greater attention to food security and nutrition concerns, and raise the profile of forest issues in the food security and nutrition agenda.

4 SOCIAL PROTECTION

Social protection is already being recognized as a key strategy for eradicating poverty, but it is also instrumental in the fight against hunger and malnutrition, as it can address all four dimensions of food security and nutrition. Evidence shows that social protection can significantly improve *access* to basic goods and services, including the ability to purchase or produce sufficient nutritious food; it can increase food *availability* indirectly by increasing agricultural production or productivity (for example, by transferring free inputs or assets); it can enhance food *stability* by helping households to manage risks better and avoid negative coping strategies, such as selling productive assets; and it can improve nutritional adequacy of food intake/*utilization* by encouraging healthier consumption patterns and improving the provision of services such as sanitation and health care. In the absence of social protection, the food-insecure and most nutritionally vulnerable are often forced to cope in ways that further increase their vulnerability and undermine their future income generation. The high

concentration of their expenditure on foods and their higher reliance on natural resources and agriculture for their livelihood in rural areas make the extension of social protection to these population groups critical.

However, the impacts of social protection depend on programme design and implementation features, such as benefit/transfer size, predictability and regularity (timing) and targeting to include the nutritionally vulnerable. Social protection interventions can be made more nutrition-sensitive when they are integrated with complementary measures that facilitate access to services and include messaging to promote good nutrition and sanitation practices. The social protection guidance note supports policy dialogue by considering different programming design options for social protection to better contribute to food security and nutrition and bridge the gap between short- and long-term interventions. It also provides guidance on how to best influence the social protection policy agenda for better food security and nutrition outcomes.

5 CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change has major effects on agricultural production and food security, including yield reductions, movement of crop production to new areas, losses in agro-biodiversity and ecological services, loss in agricultural and non-agricultural income, dependency on humanitarian aid, pollution of irrigation water, and spread of diseases. Furthermore, impacts on production will induce significant changes in trade, food prices and the situation of net food-importing countries. Food production itself also contributes to climate change: agriculture and forestry are considered two of the major contributing sectors to anthropogenic emissions. At the same time, they can play an essential role in managing climate change through biological carbon capture and storage in biomass and soil.

As an integral part of the economy, the agriculture sector has been called upon to contribute to mitigate climate change, but this should be done without compromising food and nutrition security. Developing 'triple-win pathways' – in which more food for a growing population is produced, in

a more sustainable way, but with lower overall greenhouse gas emissions – requires coherence across policies, legislation and financial mechanisms. This means integrating food and nutrition security fully into national policy discussions on climate change adaptation and mitigation; it also means integrating climate change concerns into national policy and financing instruments that are relevant to agriculture and food security. The climate change guidance note aims to support policy dialogue on what changes can be made to better integrate the climate change, food security and nutrition policy agendas in the near and medium terms.

6 GENDER EQUALITY

Food security and nutrition considerations often are missing from gender equality and women's empowerment policies; and at times food security- and nutrition-related policies do not adequately take gender considerations into account. This disconnect results from various factors, including: inadequate understanding of how gender inequality can influence food security and nutrition outcomes (and vice versa); the non-coordination among line ministries and the non-involvement of civil society organizations working on gender equality and women's rights issues in relevant policy processes; the trivialization of gender issues in food security and nutrition policy debates and decision-making; and the often invisible role of women in providing food security and nutrition for their families. Addressing these asymmetries and ensuring policy coherence will entail opening new avenues of communication between policy-makers in the gender equality and women's empowerment domain, and the food security and nutrition domain. The gender guidance note seeks to facilitate policy dialogue on how to best synchronize gender equality and women's empowerment policy objectives and food security and nutrition ones, to enhance coordination between the two policy domains, and ultimately enable women on an equal basis with men to realize their potentials as key partners in improving food security and nutrition.

7 LAND TENURE

Tenure security plays a crucial role in enhancing food security and nutrition. Secure access to land and property rights not only provide the stability and incentives to invest in agriculture, improve productivity and increase income, but they are also critical to introducing and developing sustainable agricultural practices that help preserve the natural resource base.

Tenure rights of land, forest and fisheries are governed by a broad spectrum of laws, policies and related instruments. Many of these policies and laws have been adopted to achieve a range of objectives, from reducing poverty to improving agricultural productivity, attracting foreign investment and building infrastructure. These objectives may be competing or contradictory and could have different implications on food security and nutrition. Governments have rarely considered the trade-offs and the medium- to longer-term implications on food security and nutrition in the decision-making processes that led to tenure reforms. As a result, few appropriate safeguard measures have been put in place. The land tenure guidance note supports both tenure and non-tenure experts in identifying policy options to address trade-offs between the objectives of the policy, legal and organizational frameworks that govern the tenure of land, and the food security and nutrition objectives.

8 POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS

How best to support policy-makers in improving food security and nutrition in a coherent, inclusive and sustainable way is more a political question than a purely technical one. A solid understanding of domestic political economy can help to identify opportunities for leveraging policy change. It can also enhance the role of those supporting policy change as catalysts and neutral facilitators in nationally led reforms – and increase the chances of those reforms resulting in better food security and nutrition outcomes. The guidance note provides a quick sense of what political economy analysis is and how it can add value to policy support work for improved food security and nutrition outcomes.

Adopting a stepwise approach

The different guidance notes apply a series of four simple steps with generic guiding questions. The four steps outlined below are not by definition linear and are not meant to be a blueprint, but rather to guide analysis and planning for addressing the overarching question: what changes are needed to existing policies and how might these changes be achieved?

FIGURE 1. **Four steps for addressing food security and nutrition outcomes in policies**



Step 1 CONDUCTING A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Discussions on sector policies/policy instruments and related adjustments should be embedded in a sound analysis and understanding of the underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition of those dependent on that particular sector for their livelihoods and/or their access to food. A situational

analysis involves gaining insights about the nature of the food security and nutrition problems that affect those that depend on the sector, as well as the way the sector contributes to or challenges food security and nutrition. The focus is on both the current situation and future trends that might aggravate food insecurity and malnutrition. Using a stock-taking exercise of secondary data, ad-hoc studies and key informant interviews, a picture of the food security and nutrition situation and the role of the specific sector should be generated from different viewpoints, which needs to be validated among different stakeholders to ensure consensus.

A situational analysis at country (or regional) level for a specific sector might address the following guiding questions (see also Box 5):

- What is the current food and nutrition situation and how many of the food-insecure/malnourished depend on the sector for their livelihood and/or access to food?
- Who are the food-insecure/malnourished people that depend on the sector? Which population groups are most affected?
- What are the processes that keep some people in the sector in a condition of food insecurity and malnutrition?
- What are major trends over time (e.g. urbanization, migration, climate change) that have an impact on the sector? How do they aggravate the food security and nutrition situation of different groups?

Step 2 MAPPING THE POLICY LANDSCAPE

Landscaping the key policies involves identifying and describing the main policies and related instruments that govern a specific sector and that have or could have a positive or negative impact on food security and nutrition (in the short and longer terms). These policies and instruments might occupy a variety of domains and operate at different scales and levels. For example, the livestock sector is affected by a variety of public policies, including macro-economic (e.g. fiscal, monetary) and institutional (e.g. decentralization,

Box 5

Food security and nutrition situation analysis: questions and possible data sources

Through a stock-taking exercise of secondary data and key informant interviews, a picture of the nature of the food security and nutrition problems that affect different parts of the population, their multiple underlying causes and the major trends that challenge the future situation can be generated from different viewpoints. Drawing on REACH and FAO checklists, the following questions could further lead the situational analysis (REACH, 2013; FAO, 2015):

Food security and nutrition situation

- What are current food security and nutrition outcomes (stunting, undernourishment, etc.) and which population groups are most affected?
- What is known about the main causes of this situation? What keeps the affected groups food insecure and malnourished? What factors undermine food access and livelihood insecurity and how?
- What are changes in the food security and nutrition situation over time and what constituted this change?
- What are main income sources (employment, sale of own production, remittances, loans, income-generating programmes, etc.) of the most vulnerable population groups?
- What is the level of dependence on own-production for food needs?
- What are the seasonal patterns of food availability? Are there times of food scarcity, for which foods, when and for how long?
- What are major gender issues and how does this contribute to food insecurity and malnutrition?
- What are major changes/trends (urbanization, migration, climate change, etc.) and how do they affect the situation?

Diet and child feeding

- What do diets look like?
- What are the problematic areas of the diet?
- How do diets typically differ between adults and small children?
- What are infant and young child feeding practices?
- Are complementary feeding practices for children under two adequate in terms of frequency of feeding, energy density and diversity?

Health

- What are the main infectious diseases, especially those possibly related to agriculture (malaria, hookworm, schistosomiasis, diarrheal disease, environmental enteropathy)?
- What are the main chronic diseases?
- What are the main causes of disease/health risks?
- What is the water and sanitation situation?
- Are changes in health associated with changes in dietary patterns?

Possible data sources

- National Health Surveys: Demographical Health Surveys (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief Transitions surveys (SMART)
- Food security data: Voices of the Hungry, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessments (CFSVA), dietary diversity assessments
- Country Profiles: Global Nutrition Report Country Profiles (<http://globalnutritionreport.org/the-data/nutrition-country-profiles/>), SUN Country Profiles (<http://scalingupnutrition.org/sun-countries>)
- Policy documents, study reports, FAO Country Programming Framework

civil sector reform) policies, agriculture sector policies (e.g. credit, rural infrastructure) and livestock sector-specific policies (e.g. animal health, breeding and breed conservation, animal welfare).

The following guiding questions can facilitate the landscaping process:

- What are the main policies and related instruments that govern the sector?
- What are their specific policy objectives and target groups?
What challenges do they address?
- How are they interlinked? How do they relate to international/regional agendas or agreements?
- To what extent are these policy measures implemented/enforced?
- What is the history of these policy measures (e.g. when enacted, why, level of engagement of different stakeholders)?

Step 3 ANALYSING THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

In this step, the set of relevant policies identified in the previous step is analysed to explain and address both the underlying causes and future challenges identified in Step 1. This analysis should assess the short- and longer-term impacts on food security and nutrition of the different policies and related measures governing the sector. It will require a critical review of the trade-offs and conflicts between different objectives of the sector-related policy measures and the goals of eliminating food insecurity and malnutrition, and the extent to which policy implementation by the different institutions involved is coordinated and coherent. This step also includes identifying policy adjustments that may be needed to ensure better food security and nutrition outcomes, including the use of complementary policies. In the absence of evaluations of policies, information relies on policy analysis, studies and expert opinions. Multi-stakeholder dialogue and expert panels are essential inputs to reach a common understanding of impacts, trade-offs and synergies and to identify barriers to, and catalysts for, policy change.

Guiding questions for the analysis could include:

- Have food security and nutrition considerations been explicitly included in the different policies/policy instruments? What are the intended results (theory of change) and who is targeted?
- What are the actual and potential effects (positive and negative) of the different policy measures on food security and nutrition (availability, access, utilization, stability), currently and possibly in the medium to long term?
- What are the conflicts and/or complementarities between sector objectives and food security and nutrition objectives?
- What change is needed to reduce eventual conflicts and exploit possible synergies? How can the sector better contribute to rapidly increasing the intake of a nutritious and safe diet among those affected by food insecurity and malnutrition in the short and long terms?

Step 4 CONSIDERING THE POLITICAL ECONOMY

Policy analysis could yield various options for policy adjustments that are technically viable but not politically feasible. It is essential to understand the political economy behind public policy-making and implementation that affects decision-making in the sector in order to influence the way sector-specific challenges to food security and nutrition are expressed, identify promising policy options and gain the commitment and will of major stakeholders to support change. Understanding the political economy also helps those involved to have realistic expectations about the sort of change that can be facilitated and make more informed decisions about how to engage with different stakeholders.

Political economy analysis is about understanding what drives political behaviour, how this shapes policies and programmes, and ultimately looking at who the “winners” and “losers” are. This means identifying the full range of stakeholders involved in policy deliberations (i.e. identifying who makes decisions and who influences the decision-makers), how much power they

Box 6

Monitoring policy engagement

Monitoring and learning should be an integral part of any effort aimed at facilitating change within a particular policy or related instruments to enhance food security and nutrition outcomes. A comprehensive monitoring and learning plan serves multiple purposes and would track elements related to the political landscape, the policy engagement strategy adopted, and the impacts of policy assistance on food security and nutrition.

Monitoring the political landscape is an important building block for developing and adopting an engagement strategy to bring about policy change, as it enables a better understanding of how actual policy processes unfold in a given policy context. It involves regular gathering and documenting of information on emerging policy issues, the policy

are perceived to have, what motivates their behaviour and why, and the nature of relationships among them (for instance between government and civil society). It also means analysing and monitoring (Box 6) relevant policy processes in terms of the strength of the demand for policy change, the incentives for change and the best windows of opportunity to attempt policy change. Some of the key questions to be addressed include (Balié, 2009):

Key policy actors

- Who are the key stakeholders in the sector(s) under investigation?
- What are their interests and powers? Who are the influential stakeholders?
- Who are the stakeholders supporting and opposing the identified policy options?
- Who are the potential winners and losers in case of policy change?

environment, the socio-economic framework, the major stakeholders and the international and regional policy agendas. It thereby helps to identify new windows of opportunity for facilitating policy change and informs decisions on where policy assistance should best focus. Monitoring stakeholder behaviour may help determine whether the adopted policy engagement strategy might be having the desired effect and informs decisions to adjust course.

Monitoring the food security and nutrition situation, the way a specific sector contributes to or challenges food security and nutrition, and the degree to which related policies are adjusted and implemented contribute to assessing whether the provided policy assistance is having a significant impact on food security and nutrition outcomes. Tools like a client satisfaction survey among relevant stakeholders are an important means to monitor the quality of policy assistance, focusing on key evaluation criteria like “relevance”, “effectiveness”, “efficiency”, “sustainability” and “impact”.

Identifying windows of opportunity for policy change

- Who are the potential or actual policy champions?
- Who sets the policy agenda? Who advises/influences whom?
- How are formal and informal policy processes organized (e.g. fora, coordination mechanisms and institutional set-up, rules and procedures of the policy-making)?
- How is the policy debate organized? What and where are the policy spaces?
- How could the policy change be promoted? Through which policy arena?
- How do international and regional policy agendas influence the national debate on the policy issue being analysed?

Section 3

Key concepts used in the notes

Food security

Over the last three decades, several definitions and conceptual frameworks have been developed for food security, and its relationship with nutrition. The definition of food security has changed since its introduction in the early 1940s. In the 1970s, the term was defined from the perspective of food supply to ensure that all people everywhere have enough food to eat; in the 1980s, the importance of consumption and access were put forward. In 1996, the World Food Summit proposed a new definition that is still in use:

"Food security, at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels, is achieved when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FAO, 1996).

This definition encompasses the four dimensions of food security – availability, access, stability and utilization:

- **Food availability:** which relates to the supply of food and a country's ability to provide enough nutritious food to meet the needs/demands of the population, and is determined by the level of food production or imports, stock levels and access to markets;
- **Access to food:** which includes social, physical and economic resources to obtain food;
- **Food stability:** which means that access cannot be compromised by fluctuations in weather or market prices, by seasonality, and by economic or political shocks;

- **Food utilization:** which refers to the way the body makes the most of various nutrients in the food. Knowledge, good childcare and hygiene practices, diversity of the diet and adequate intra-household distribution of food all influence the levels of energy and nutrient intake by individuals.

Food insecurity is the reverse and can be chronic or acute. People are chronically food-insecure when they are unable to meet minimum food requirements over a sustained period of time, primarily as a result of poverty. Acute or transitory food insecurity refers to a sudden drop in the ability to produce or access enough food to maintain a good nutritional status, often as a result of climatic shocks, economic collapse or violent conflict.

Nutrition

Nutrition is defined as *"the intake of food, and the interplay of biological, social, and economic processes that influence the growth, function and repair of the body"* (FAO, 2013). These guidelines link the concepts of food security and nutrition, with the general assumption that nutrition will be influenced through the food security pathway. However, food security does not automatically translate into nutritional security. Individual household members may be malnourished as a result of having nutrient-poor diets, even though the household itself is food-secure. Food security is a goal in itself, and is a necessary – but not sufficient – precondition for nutrition security. The relationship between food security and nutrition security is complex and entails more than food. The Road Map for Scaling-Up Nutrition (SUN, 2010 edition), defines nutrition security as follows: *"Nutrition security is achieved when secure access to an appropriately nutritious diet is coupled with a sanitary environment, adequate health services and care, to ensure a healthy and active life for all household members"*. Hence, a household is nutrition-secure when it has sufficient food, adequate attention is being paid to the required dietary intake, and it enjoys a healthy environment. Food security, on the other hand, can be assured without addressing care, health or sanitation.

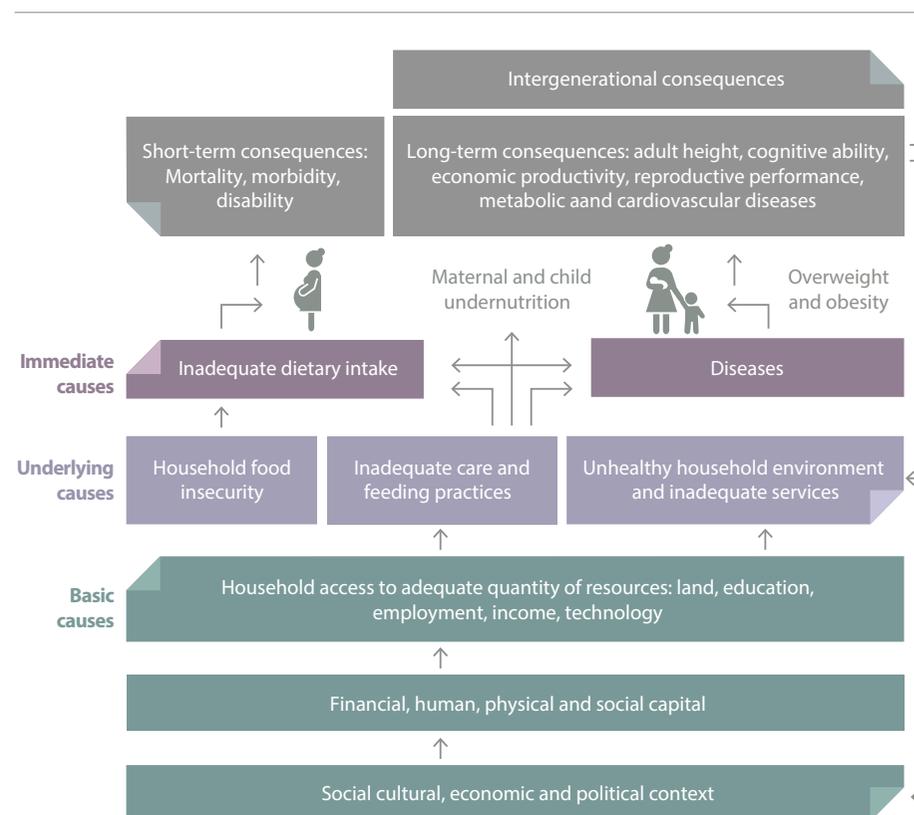
The term malnutrition indicates an abnormal physiological condition caused by deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in energy and/or nutrients necessary for an active, healthy life. As anticipated by this definition, there are multiple forms of malnutrition:

- **Undernutrition:** the outcome of insufficient food intake to meet dietary energy requirements, and/or poor absorption or biological use of nutrients as a result of repeated infectious disease. It can be chronic (i.e. resulting from long-term inadequate intake and/or repeated infections) or acute (i.e. resulting from a rapid deterioration of nutritional status due to sudden food deprivation and/or bout of illness);
- **Micronutrient deficiencies:** a specific form of undernutrition due to lack of vitamins, minerals and/or trace elements required in small amounts but essential for the proper functioning, growth and metabolism of a living organism;
- **Overweight and obesity:** a condition of body weight that is above normal for height as a result of an excessive accumulation of fat, usually a result of excessive food intake relative to dietary nutrient requirements.

These different causes of malnutrition were conceptualized in a framework that was first released in 1990 (Fig. 2). This framework is widely used by the nutrition community for programming and identifies – specifically for child undernutrition – three levels of interrelated causes:

- **Immediate causes:** these operate at the level of the individual and are related to inadequate food and nutrient intake and to disease.
- **Underlying causes:** these influence households and communities. They are grouped into three broad categories: household food insecurity (in terms of food availability, access, utilization and stability); inadequate care (e.g. poor breastfeeding and weaning practices, personal hygiene, child care); and poor access to, and availability of, clean water, sanitation and health services.

FIGURE 2. Conceptual framework of malnutrition



- **Basic causes:** these relate to structures, processes and phenomena that operate at the level of the society. They include political and socio-economic factors, such as governance and institutional capacities (including public services and the private sector), gender relations, social solidarity mechanisms and the presence of safety nets, access to education, presence of infrastructure, trade policies and systems, as well as conflict. Basic causes also include environmental factors, such as climate change and the agro-ecological context in which communities live.

This conceptual framework especially emphasizes the importance of underlying and basic causes, including the linkages between political and social factors, and shows that these three causes interact in important ways, with factors at one level influencing other levels. For example, in the context of obesity and unhealthy eating, it is necessary to take into account the whole range of factors that influence people's food choices, such as the influence of surrounding food environments, time availability and other lifestyle factors (e.g. physical activity, smoking and drinking habits).

Healthy diets and the dietary transition

As part of the debate on nutrition, increasing focus is given to the quality of the diets and to the environmental conditions that facilitate people's adoption of "healthy" diets. WHO defines a healthy diet as follows: "A healthy diet helps protect against malnutrition in all its forms, as well as non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer" (WHO, 2015). More specifically, a healthy diet is characterized by adequate consumption of health-promoting foods, food groups and nutrients, and moderation in consumption of foods, food groups and nutrients, which are linked with poor health outcomes (Guenther *et al.*, 2008). Current scientific evidence supports that dietary risks increase with:

- **low consumption** of food items such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, milk, legumes and pulses, sea food and polyunsaturated fatty acids; and
- **high consumption** of red and processed meat, sugar, trans-fatty acids and salt.

Dietary risks have become the top global risk factor contributing to early deaths (Lancet, 2015). The so-called "nutrition transition" is the shift in dietary consumption from traditional diets to diets that are characterized by higher consumption of fats, sugars and processed food. This is coupled with adoption of new lifestyles (e.g. more sedentary), which have a deleterious impact on

individual health. This dietary transition has induced new global nutrition trends characterized by a rapid increase in rates of overweight, obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases.

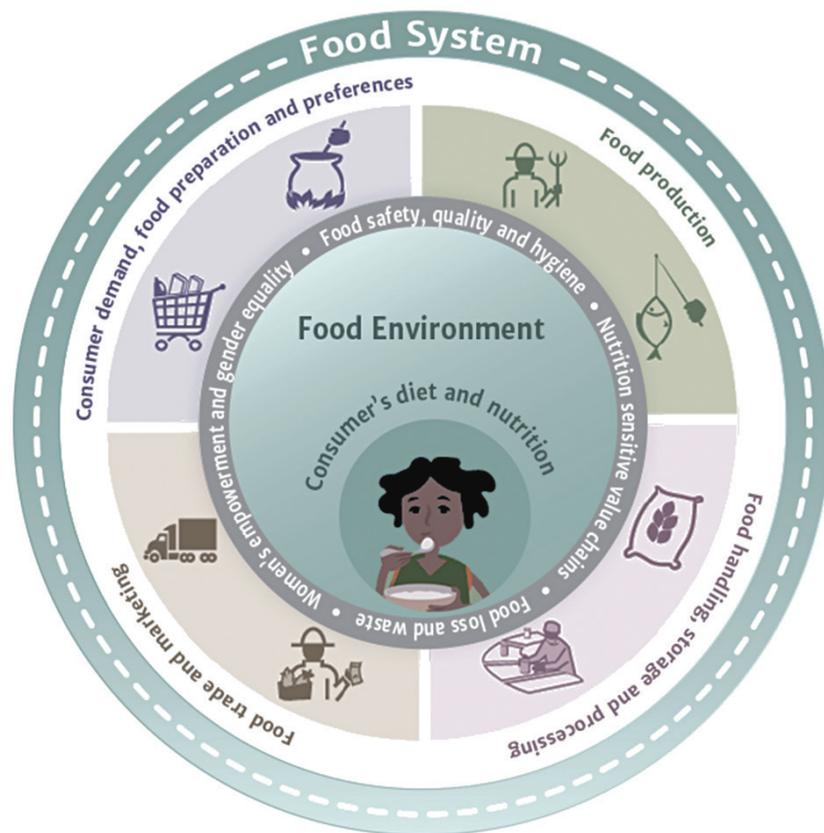
Food system(s) and food environment(s)

People's food choices are dependent on many factors, including the availability and price of the various foods which are available in their surroundings, the convenience to prepare them, and their attractiveness. Together, these factors shape the food environment, i.e. "*the range of foods available, affordable, convenient, and made desirable to people*" (Herforth and Ahmed, 2015). Healthy food environments are therefore "*environments in which the foods, beverages and meals that contribute to a population's diet meeting national dietary guidelines are widely available, affordably priced, reasonably convenient, and widely promoted*" (Herforth, 2016, adapted from Swinburn *et al.*, 2013).

Through the food environment, the food system influences consumers' diets and nutritional status. A food system "*gathers all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.) and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the outputs of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes*" (HLPE, 2014). One way to look at the food system is to organize it around some main functions (Fig. 3); each of them includes a subset of activities, actors and related environments, including all supporting infrastructures, institutions, regulations and norms. For example:

- **Food production** encompasses rural and urban crop production and livestock rearing at any scale, fisheries and forestry, the management of the natural resource base (land, water, soil, plants seeds, animal breeds etc.) which underpins such activities, infrastructures such as water supply, networks of farmers, institutional elements such as formal and customary land rights, agriculture investments, policies and programmes, etc.

FIGURE 3. Main functions of the food system



- **Food storage and processing** include activities at household, community and commercial levels, related infrastructures (e.g. traditional cereal cribs, village granaries, mills, commercial silos, food factories), actors (e.g. farmers, micro-processors, small and medium enterprises, large national and multinational businesses), regulations of these activities, public and private investments, and strategies for agro-industrial development, etc.

- **Food trade** encompasses exchanges at different levels (local, domestic, regional and international), elements such as road infrastructures, cold chain during transportation and at the marketplace, trade regulations and agreements, among others.
- **Food marketing** includes all activities, actors and related infrastructures and regulations around the physical sale of food (wholesaling, retailing, catering) and its promotion.
- The **consumer level** include demand and its drivers (e.g. purchasing power, preferences), preservation, preparation, cooking practices, intra-household distribution and surrounding cultural norms, policies which are geared toward supporting consumption, informing and protecting consumers or changing their food behaviours through education, social protection schemes, etc.

The food system is not static. Indeed, developing countries have been experiencing a huge transformation in their food systems over the last three decades, characterized by a rapid growth of the post-harvest segment of the value chain, including processing, logistics, wholesale, retailing (i.e. supermarkets) and fast-food catering (Reardon *et al.*, 2003, Reardon *et al.* 2009; Gomez, *et al.*, 2013). This has implications for nutrition; countries with such a transformation in the food system tend to also undergo a dietary transition and a nutrition transition.

These transformations in the food system, and indeed the food system itself, are driven by the choices and behaviour of a multitude of actors, including farmers, businesses and consumers. In other words, the food system can be considered as a behavioural system. Changes in the behaviour of actors can be induced through instruments such as taxes, subsidies and regulation (Pinstrupp-Andersen and Watson, 2011). This implies that there is a strong potential for public policy to improve the nutrition outcomes of the food system – and to make it more nutrition sensitive.

Food security and nutrition are not the only objectives of governments – let alone of the actors who work in the food system. For this reason, it is important to “apply a nutrition lens” to the food system in order to increase food security and nutrition outcomes. “Applying a nutrition lens” means to identify how each function of the food system shapes the food environments, and in turn influences diets and nutrition outcomes, to explicitly incorporate nutrition objectives in food system-related policies and programmes, and to adopt planning processes accordingly. This is the essence of the food system approach to nutrition promoted by FAO.

Policy, measures, instruments and processes

The term policy comes from the Middle English word *policie*, meaning *art of government or civil organization*. A standard definition of policy is: “a plan or course of action, as of a government, political party, or business, intended to influence and determine decisions, actions, and other matters” (West’s Dictionary of American Law). More specifically, a public policy can be defined as “an intervention of a public authority aimed at affecting the normal course of events” (Birkland, 2010). Public policies are implemented through the adoption of policy measures, i.e. concrete interventions and actions aimed at achieving specific objectives using policy instruments under the control of the policy-maker, such as taxes, subsidies and regulations, that are modified to induce changes in the behaviour of socio-economic actors.

Policy measures affect behaviour through the use of different incentives and disincentives, such as:

- Directly supplying goods, services or transfers which affect the income or wealth position of economic agents (e.g. transport, information and health care services; direct support to the income of poor households);
- Promoting/encouraging/supporting actions of selected economic agents (e.g. policy measures to stimulate the adoption of new

technologies, to promote export products or to support employment in a specific sector);

- Saving/preserving assets and resources (e.g. encouraging sustainable agricultural techniques like the rotation of cultures, soil fertility);
- Imposing/enforcing (e.g. vaccinations, waste-water treatment, appropriate disposal of hazardous wastes);
- Banning (e.g. the use of certain types of pesticides, selected imports or exports); and
- Discouraging (e.g. unsustainable production practices, excessive energy use).

A policy takes many shapes and forms and may occur at all levels of governance, from municipal to intergovernmental. It can be revealed through legislative texts, policy statements and documents, administrative practices such as sector plans, programmes and budgets, or changes in high-level rules of government agencies (Schneider and Ingram, 1997).

Policies are formulated and implemented through policy processes. A policy process is the way in which policy changes are planned, designed, implemented and evaluated. Given the fact that public policies involve many actors who are interlinked through socio-economic or political relationships, a policy process is multi-faceted, complex and reflective of the social and political contexts in which it takes place. As such, creating and implementing policies to address particular issues requires asking not just what is technically viable, but also what is politically feasible.

A ‘coherent and cross-sectoral policy framework for food security and nutrition’

Policy coherence can be defined as consistency, comprehensiveness and harmonious-compatible outcomes across policy areas and sectors without compromising the integrity of policy-makers’ goals (Dubé *et al*, 2014). Policy

coherence occurs at different levels. Horizontal coherence ensures synergy within and among different policy domains while minimizing inconsistencies and conflicting goals. Vertical coherence ensures the same approach but across different tiers of government: international, national and local (*ibid*). The concept coherent and cross-sectoral policy framework in these guidelines thus refers to a situation (context, state, condition) of collective policy action among key sectors (e.g. agriculture, fisheries, forestry, health, education) and/or policy domains (e.g. social welfare, land tenure, gender and women's empowerment, climate change) towards enhancing food security and nutrition. The sector/policy domain-specific policy instruments each address different aspects of the underlying structural causes based on their mandate, while trade-offs between the specific policy objectives and food security and nutrition objectives are recognized and resolved and synergies are effectively exploited.

By definition, a cross-sectoral policy framework for food security and nutrition cuts across different sectors. In principle, these are virtually all sectors affecting the structural causes of food insecurity and malnutrition in a particular context. However, each of these sectors pursues its own goals, which may not always be in harmony with food security and nutrition objectives. Due to lack of understanding and weak cross-sectoral coordination, food security and nutrition concerns are not always sufficiently factored into specific-sector policies and decision-making. At the same time, sectoral concerns do not always adequately feature on the food security and nutrition agenda. The result is that proposed policies and programmes do not include alternative instruments and pathways, which would maximize their impact on food security and nutrition given the *sui generis* objectives of these policies and programmes. Therefore, promoting a coherent approach calls for sharpening the policy focus of the relevant sector policies in terms of their specific contributions to food security and nutrition. In other words, these sector policies are not only appraised and evaluated from

the perspective of their specific policy objective(s), but also with regard to objectives related to food security and nutrition.

In practice, implementing a coherent and cross-sectoral framework for food security and nutrition is complex and challenged by serious gaps in detailed knowledge of the actual and potential impacts of specific policy measures on categories of food- insecure and malnourished populations. Further, capacities to recognize synergies and resolve trade-offs among objectives of various sector policy instruments and food security and nutrition objectives are limited, especially given the overall association of food security with food production and agriculture and nutrition with health. This policy uncertainty coupled with conflicting political agendas across sectors puts limits on how much can be done to promote coherence, even in one sector with various sub-sectors. Thus, in practice one is limited to ensure coherence among the key sectors that influence food security and nutrition outcomes. An example of a country that adopted a coherent and cross-sectoral policy framework that reflects the contributions of selected sectors to food security and nutrition is Brazil (Box 7).

The core of any strategy for greater policy coherence is to agree on common policy objectives that address both sectoral needs and food security- and nutrition-related challenges in a coordinated and consistent manner (Hawkes, 2015). In this respect, policy coherence requires the engagement of a broad range of policy actors (Box 8). At the same time it concerns identifying and overcoming tensions and conflicts within and across different sectors or sub-sectors that might undermine food security and nutrition outcomes, and facilitating synergies across policy measures to create win-win scenarios. This implies that decision-makers and other stakeholders have a common understanding of food security and nutrition problems and solutions in the country and recognize and understand the interactions between different sectors and their specific impacts on food security and nutrition.

Policy change

A conventional view of policy change is that it happens in a series of well-defined, linear steps that assume policy stakeholders make rational decisions based on the best options or evidence at hand. In practice, policy change is a complex process, and is reflective of the social and political contexts in which it takes place.

Policy processes often involve several actors or coalitions/networks, each with different levels of power, interest, knowledge, capacity and sometimes different values and beliefs. These policy coalitions or networks can often be close-knit and difficult to access. They may favour particular sources of evidence and certain actors over others. Individuals and networks are continuously engaging with and influencing one another (through formal and informal processes). Therefore policy, if it does change, tends to emerge unpredictably. Social and economic crises, such as food price, fuel or financial crises, can prompt lurches of attention from one issue to another, or even prompt policy-makers to completely change the ways in which they understand a policy problem. However, while lurches of attention are common, changes to well-established ways of thinking in government are rare, or take place only in the long run. Policy change can vary in scale, ranging from the modification of pre-designed parameters and routines at one end of the spectrum, to wholesale rethinking of existing policy goals. The former is likely to happen more frequently, while the latter happens more rarely and in times of crisis.

Although not necessarily more complex than other policy areas, influencing policy in the agriculture and related (sub)sectors brings its own particular challenges. The agriculture sector in many developing countries includes an “unusually large and growing range of public concerns” (Wiggins *et al.*, 2013). In most low-income countries it employs much of the workforce, contributes significantly to the gross domestic product, and agricultural practices and land use are often the subject of important environmental concerns. Consequently, a “wide range of objectives are commonly invested in agriculture and rural development: economic growth and export earnings, employment, equality,

Box 7

Brazil - The *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger) policy framework

The *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger), introduced by President Lula Ignácio da Silva in 2003, was created to eliminate hunger and improve the livelihoods of the poor. The Brazilian government placed food security and nutrition as a strategic objective of public policies in order to promote a coherent and coordinated approach and integrate support programmes focusing on agriculture, nutrition, health, education and poverty reduction.

Fome Zero focused on two areas: (i) improving access to food among low-income populations using social protection instruments, coupled with the recovery of minimum wage and of employment; and (ii) strengthening family farming, the main source of food supply to the domestic market. To ensure proper implementation of the related sector policies and prevent diversions, the government passed several laws, including the Organic Law on Food and Nutritional Security to ensure the right to adequate food, and a law on Family Agriculture in 2006 to define the concept of family agriculture and specify beneficiaries of related support programmes.

A new Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger was set up to coordinate the action of all the other ministries around the national food and nutritional security policy. Making this new Ministry accountable to the highest level of government, the Brazilian model stressed the importance of policy action across sectors to fight hunger, and the commitment of all key ministries to help plan, monitor and evaluate the initiative.

Source: de Schutter, 2014

Box 8

Factors facilitating a more coherent and cross-sectoral policy framework for food security and nutrition

- **Political will and commitment:** commitment at the highest political level to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition is essential to manage conflicting policy agendas and address weak sector coordination for improved food security and nutrition outcomes.
- **Knowledge and analytical capacity:** evidence-based analysis and relevant data related to food security and nutrition implications of policy actions are needed to inform decision-making and help translate political commitments into practice. Policy analysts should thus be able to:
 - Identify, describe, analyse and assess the impacts of policy options on food security and nutrition in the short and long terms;
 - Highlight trade-offs and/or synergies between sector policy objectives and food security and nutrition ones and propose adjustments in the policy instruments and/or suggest complementary measures to improve food security and nutrition outcomes; and,
 - Convey/communicate relevant analytical findings to decision-makers and other stakeholders involved in decision-making processes so as to base policies and policy dialogue on an equal footing among stakeholders and reduce the scope of ideology.

- **Governance capacity:** policy processes are organized in a way to ensure:
 - *Multi-stakeholder dialogue:* policy dialogue among analysts, decision-makers and other stakeholders is facilitated so as to reach a common understanding of impacts, synergies and trade-offs and to identify the catalysts for, and barriers to, policy change;
 - *Cross-sectoral collaboration:* coordination mechanisms at sufficiently high level are in place to ensure that policy decisions take into account food security and nutrition concerns, facilitate synergies and resolve potential policy conflicts;
 - *Consistent implementation:* policy implementation is consistent with decisions taken, including those regarding the implementation of accompanying measures to address food security and nutrition concerns;
 - *Appropriate monitoring and evaluation:* the intended and unintended impacts of policies on food security and nutrition are assessed and analysed to enhance accountability and learning, support evidence-based policy-making and address instances of incoherence within and/or across policies.

gender equality, food and nutrition security, environmental conservation and regional equity” (ibid). These interests frequently compete, and discussions over priorities and trade-offs can take time, and are often revisited.

Policy engagement

Policy engagement that produces tangible, positive change is almost always challenging for the following reasons (Hummelbrunner & Jones, 2013):

- **Information on processes and positions of key actors is incomplete:**

in most cases, those working on policy issues will have incomplete data/information about the issue and the context that shapes it – why the situation is as it is, what drives the policy process and what drives actors to act in a certain way. Since influencing policy involves political and sometimes highly conflictual processes, there can be great difficulty in understanding what different policy actors really think.

- **The situation shifts constantly – and changes are unpredictable:**

most policy spaces are crowded with different interests. These can change unpredictably, and influencing objectives and approaches might need to be changed. Unpredictable change can make it almost impossible to foresee the results of a set of activities on policy. Change can also occur over a long time, which may not sit well with the usual systems and processes of project management.

- **It is difficult to know if one’s policy work is having an impact:** given the number of actors involved in shaping policy and their diverse interests, it can be difficult to recognize signals that may indicate that key messages have been acknowledged and acted upon. If there does seem to be change, attributing this to specific interventions in a context where many people might be engaged with policy will be challenging. Influencing and engagement work is often more effective when carried out in alliances, coalitions and networks, which presents the challenge of assessing the specific contribution of one organization to a specific change in policy.

There are many approaches to engaging with policy (Box 9). One way of classifying these approaches is to distinguish those that take an inside-track approach from those that take an outside-track approach (Start & Hovland, 2004). Inside-track features methods that may use direct interactions with decision-makers, allies and other key actors. They include participation in negotiations, meetings, direct communications with government ministers, or informal, face-to-face discussions with close collaborators and other contacts. Outside-track uses methods that target a larger number of individuals, or the political debate on an issue, through public messaging and campaigning. They aim to build public support for new policy, use public meetings and speeches to communicate the rationale for a proposed reform, and/or use television and radio to raise public awareness of an issue.

Using these two forms of classification, policy engagement can be loosely divided into four different types: formal inside-track (an advising form of engagement); formal outside-track (advocacy, such as forming coalitions outside the government and providing data to petition the government); informal inside-track (lobbying); and informal outside-track (activism).

Policies can be shaped by a wide range of actors – a proactive politician or bureaucrat, an economic or social interest group well organized enough to have access to power, an activist judge nudging the executive to act, or a citizen’s campaign that gains traction in civil society and the media. Within government, often it is the civil servant who makes (or stalls) policy, while ministers set the broad political parameters and attend to the day-to-day work of public office. Given the politicization of the civil service in many contexts, commentators and practitioners advise that in order to work with such public agencies in the long term, it is better to target and build relationships with second- or third-tier officials, as they will be the ones who survive any re-structuring and are also the ones who possess the institutional memory that can shape decisions and implementation (Young and Quinn, 2012).

Box 9

FAO-ODI Handbook for Policy Engagement and Influence

The FAO-ODI handbook on policy engagement and influence is a modification of the ODI RAPID Outcome Mapping Approach (ROMA) and comprises a suite of tools that can be used at any stage in policy engagement to learn how to diagnose a problem, understand the type of impact, set realistic objectives for influence, develop a plan to achieve those objectives, and reflect on the learning to refine the plan. The main principles underpinning this approach are:

- First, policy engagement and influence approaches need to be actor- and organization-centric: change is shaped by people's actions and their relationships with one another.
- Second, a "try and evolve" approach has been demonstrated to promote flexibility and adaptability to handle the complexity of policy engagement. Over time, circumstances will most likely change and the engagement approach needs to be revised.
- Third, involving key stakeholders in delivering and reflecting on policy engagement work promotes a two-way accountability, which will serve to improve the effectiveness of policy work.
- Fourth, if change does occur, it is unlikely to be solely attributable to one organization's work. Change is usually the result of a complex web of interactions between different actors, forces and trends. Focusing on contribution removes the pressure.
- Last, there is no designated roadmap for a policy engagement process. It is more useful to consider one's policy engagement process as a compass navigating one through a fog, rather than as a roadmap with a set of precise directions.

Source: Young, J, et al., 2014.

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