



Achieving Zero Hunger!

#ZHCoalition

What can governments and the private sector do in the face of a multidimensional crisis?



The world is off-track and off-path to achieve zero hunger. The economic effects of the covid-19 crisis, climate change and most recently the Ukraine war are driving up prices for food, fertilizer and fuel significantly. The global food crisis exacerbates the situation and calls upon the world to act fast and with determination. Leaders of the G7 have committed an additional USD 4.5 billion this year, and the G20 has made it a top political priority. The need for quick and necessary action should however not neglect the longer-term perspective of much-needed food systems transformation.

The UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) that took place in September 2021, was another moment where significant political momentum was seen to intensify the commitment to achieve zero hunger as part of food systems transformation. In response to this, the Zero Hunger Coalition and the Zero Hunger Private Sector Pledge were set up as two ways to catalyse action. In the side-event [*Achieving Zero Hunger: What can governments and the private sector do in the face of a multidimensional crisis?*](#), co-organized by Nigeria, Zambia, the Private Sector Mechanism (PSM), the European Union Commission, Shamba Centre for Food and Climate and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), stakeholders discussed why they feel action on Zero Hunger is essential, and how the Coalition and Pledge can be of added value.

Coordination and amplification for achieving zero hunger at country level

Carin Smaller, co-founder and Executive Director of Shamba Centre for Food and Climate, introduced the session by underlining the importance of catalysing coordinated action with the goal to transform food systems to end hunger for all. Widely supported by country governments and other stakeholders, this is the spirit of the Zero Hunger Coalition. Action at country-level is key, and panellists agreed and underlined the need for country level action. Christine Campeau, Director Global Advocacy for Food Systems at CARE, explained how the UNFSS was one of the most inclusive UN-led processes of all times, with as one essential outcome 117 national food systems transformation pathways. She referred to essential mindset shifts that were observed, where governments moved from thinking in silos to systems action.

Ensuring strong collaborative and concerned action for the Zero Hunger agenda has to include working together with a wide range of stakeholders, where country governments are in the lead, with other stakeholders enabling their priorities. The three United Nations organisations based in Rome - FAO, IFAD and WFP - are at the heart of this agenda.

Their representatives underlined the urgency and importance of the Zero Hunger Coalition. Maximo Torero, Chief Economist of FAO, pointed out that the imperative to be more effective and efficient to propose solutions for achieving hunger and malnutrition while at the same time accelerating the process of food transformation. Satu Santal, Associate Vice-President External Relations and Governance at IFAD, pointed out that the Zero Hunger Coalition is an important partnership to join forces, which can facilitate support to governments with their critical role in food systems coordination. Tim Hunter, Director Private Sector Partnerships and Fundraising at WFP, aligned with the other panellists that we should focus on the root cause of the current crisis and emphasise food systems transformation.

The importance of evidence and country costed road maps

Among the solutions, CERES2030 took a very important step forward in identifying the most cost-effective investments that are required to achieve hunger sustainably. Such evidence, including country costed roadmaps, can make an important contribution to the implementation and prioritization of the national food systems transformation pathways. H.E. Mr. Yaya Olaniran from Nigeria highlighted that “evidence must form the basis for investments” and pointed out a diverse set of interventions - based on scientific evidence - ranging from addressing the yield and productivity gap including for livestock, the investment gap on climate adaptation, working to decrease food loss and waste and providing nutrition education.

H.E. Dr. Masuhwa from Zambia added that multidimensional approaches are required, where initiatives such as the Zero Hunger Coalition should focus on the local needs and context. He pointed to country costed roadmaps, such as those recently published for [Malawi](#) and [Nigeria](#), will contribute to a new pragmatic approach for working with local realities and capacities. Conrad Rein, from the European Union Commission, underlined how evidence in the form of roadmaps and costed plans helps to remain focused on actions that have long-term impact. The Zero Hunger Coalition should consider such evidence to identify systemic entry points, which have potential for high impact and are proven to be effective interventions.

Matching private sector pledges with government priorities

Global commitments underpinned with financing and country level action are key. Panellists also pointed out that the private sector’s participation as another stakeholder is vital, and that the Zero Hunger Private Pledge catalyses the focus and attention of the private sector. As part of this side-event it was announced that the milestone of half a billion dollars of Pledges has been passed. Michael Keller, in his role as chair of the PSM which has mobilized many pledges, commented to be proud of the commitment that 44 companies have made to Zero Hunger. At the same time, he reminded that there is a shared responsibility, where the private sector should also take its role to contribute to Zero Hunger.

ETG, AGREA and East West Seed are each excellent examples of companies that demonstrate that the private sector can contribute to Zero Hunger by investing directly in agrifood value chains and also bringing their voices to policy reforms. Carole Sorreau explained that ETG's operations have been based in Africa for over five decades, working with smallholder farmers. In their new recruitment, women and youth are favoured and best practices are shared with smallholder farmers to improve crop yields. East West Seed is investing in training and extension services to complement the supply of high-quality tools and resources such as seeds. Maaïke Groot from East West Seed shared that 500,000 smallholder farmers have been trained, and they have committed to train an additional 1 million farmers in the next five years. For AGREA, farm development is a key part of their business model and includes activities around good quality of soils, as was explained by Cherrie Atilano.

Moving forward

Echoing Steve Godfrey from the Global Alliance of Improved Nutrition, solidarity is key but so is impact. There is enormous potential to ensure close alignment between business investments with national food systems transformation, especially focusing on high priorities like Zero Hunger. Establishing a strong link between the Zero Hunger Coalition and the Zero Hunger Private Sector Pledge provides an opportunity for learning and impact to have regular business investments feed into social and economic development goals. Reversing the trends and achieving zero hunger is the first test of the quality of a food system, and a task all of us should deliver on.