



## Expert Group Meeting on Progress in Achieving SDG 2 in preparation for the High-Level Political Forum

UN Headquarters, New York, 12-13 June 2017

### Key Messages

**1. To reach SDG2, we need to recognize the critical interdependence of poverty and hunger. Addressing these issues requires political commitment, comprehensive, nationally driven and country-specific policies and programmes supported by inclusive, multi-stakeholder governance mechanisms, partnerships and international cooperation.**

People should be the focus of all efforts to end hunger and malnutrition. Nearly 80 percent of the world's extreme poor live in rural areas of developing countries. Many of them are landless workers; subsistence, smallholder, family farmers; pastoralists; fisher folk and indigenous peoples. At the same time, the rural poor contribute significantly to food security and nutrition, producing most of the world's food. Rural people must be considered not only beneficiaries of assistance but also and *mainly* as agents of change. Rural women play a critical role in food systems, including production, sustaining dietary diversity and providing for the health and nutrition of their families. Adequate pro-poor, nutrition- and gender-sensitive investments and financing, including agricultural support and expansion of access to social protection, which are more explicitly aligned to the SDG1 and SDG2 outcomes must be ensured. Root causes of hunger and poverty must be addressed, such as conflict, inadequate access to land, water, agricultural inputs, finance and markets, natural resource degradation climate change and lack of participation in decision-making. The people and needs of countries in special situations and protracted crises must be urgently addressed to leave no one behind.

**2. Transformative change is necessary to reach SDG2.** This means transforming our food systems through a holistic approach, from production to consumption, so that they are more sustainable, inclusive and resilient to climate change and support the production, access and consumption of safe and nutritious food. Food and agriculture can be part of the solution to climate change, to end poverty and be a powerful driver for the entire 2030 Agenda. But we cannot look only at production and productivity. Transformative change in food and agriculture requires equal consideration to the social, environmental and economic pillars of sustainable development. A transformative approach means moving beyond the Green Revolution to increase production and productivity sustainably for the health and well-being of people, without negative social and environmental externalities in land and water tenure, crop, livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and forestry systems including the loss of biological diversity. Key to transformation is the empowerment of small-scale producers including women, youth, indigenous peoples, pastoralists and fishers, who will continue to make up the vast majority of food producers and natural resource managers globally.

**3. The interlinkages between SDG2 and the entire 2030 Agenda need to be understood.** Eradicating poverty, hunger and malnutrition go hand in hand. We need a whole-of-society approach to deliver on SDG 2. We need to look at the entire food system, beyond the farm gate. Food security, adequate nutrition and sustainable agriculture will not be achieved without addressing climate change and the loss of biodiversity; using land, water and energy sustainably; tackling food loss and waste; promoting responsible consumption; tapping into the potential of agriculture to create decent jobs; expanding social protection; and achieving gender equality. All this needs to be accomplished within macroeconomic frameworks that pursue equitable development. Interlinkages among conflict, natural disasters and population movement must also be considered.

**4. Diversity and diversification are key for achieving SDG2.** We must maintain and sustainably use genetic diversity, and ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits. We know that diversification of production practices, for example through agroecology, agroforestry or organic farming will be key for building resilience to climate change, land and water degradation and pests and disease risks. Maintaining and using genetic diversity also needs to be incorporated in policy and program design. Farmers should be placed at the center of decision making related to use of genetic diversity. Farmers' rights to genetic resources must be recognized and their traditional knowledge needs to be valorized. The productive capacity of the poorest need to be enhanced through integrated approaches such as combining social protection programmes with support for agricultural production; exploring options such as public procurement, farmers markets, and different ways to link local production to school meals and other public procurement systems; integrating



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small-scale producers and family farmers into value chains; and strengthening producer organizations and cooperatives. Efforts must keep in mind the need to provide market and food access for vulnerable populations in urban and rural areas to ensure the quality, safety, diversity and stability of their diets.

**5. Improved policy, investment and regulatory frameworks support delivery of SDG outcomes.** Legal frameworks must be strengthened to promote a rights-based approach including the right to food, and secure equitable tenure rights over land, water and fisheries resources. Existing international instruments can provide guidance to countries, such as the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Food in the Context of National Security, Voluntary Guidelines on Small-Scale Fisheries, Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure and the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems. There is a need for increased policy coherence amongst international legal and policy interests to achieve the SDG2 and all the SDGs.

**6. Food security and nutrition governance must be more inclusive, at all levels,** starting from local communities, going up to the global level and ensuring equitable participation at all levels. Inclusive governance structures should guide the allocation of resources and incentives, use of policy and regulatory frameworks, and promote accountability. Governance of food systems will be essential for shaping food systems that support healthy diets, as well as other social and economic outcomes.

**7. Malnutrition in all of its forms is a major cause of the global burden of disease** and causes significant costs to the global economy. Dietary simplification underpins the nutrition transition causing malnutrition. Hunger robs millions of people the opportunity of a life with dignity. Overweight and obesity are associated with many non-communicable diseases. Addressing nutrition in the first 1000 days, including the protection of breastfeeding and prioritizing the needs of adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating women, are critical for the eradication of malnutrition. To ensure healthy people we also must have healthy food systems that support healthy diets as called for in the Decade of Action on Nutrition.

**8. Family farmers and small-scale producers are central for food systems of the future,** as are the local indigenous and traditional food systems they manage and support. Emphasis should be placed on alternative and innovative approaches, including agroecology, organic farming and other more sustainable production models that balance the social, environmental and economic dimensions. Emphasis must also be placed in promoting equitable sharing of opportunities and equal rights for both women and men farmers and agricultural producers.

**9. Agricultural transformation must become more knowledge intensive to achieve income and productivity targets for small and family farmers.** As this happens, the development of science, technology and innovation for agriculture should be increasingly guided by local needs and demands. Methods of assessment and priority-setting must be inclusive, incorporating and building on local traditional and indigenous knowledge, respect the needs of the local population, be context specific, and support the creation or strengthening of dynamic and innovative food systems. Innovation should embrace not only diverse sustainable production technologies, but also institutional change and strengthening, inclusive governance and innovative partnerships linking urban to rural and local to national, as well as innovative ways to promote access to knowledge and engage with the private sector.

**10. Urgent action is required** to respond to the severe food insecurity and malnutrition crises, famine and threat of famine that we are seeing today and to reduce the likelihood of their recurrence in the near future. Water scarcity, drought and natural disasters – all driven or exacerbated by climate change – are creating crisis conditions and increasing political fragility, food insecurity, malnutrition and distress migration. Urgent action is also needed to accelerate transformational changes to move beyond emergencies towards the development of inclusive, resilient and sustainable food systems for well-nourished and healthy people.