

## Accelerating the End of Hunger and Malnutrition A Global Conference

Concept Note (July 2018)

### The global challenge

Hunger and the multiple burdens of malnutrition cause human suffering and hold back economic potential. In recent years, the progress in defeating hunger has slowed and there is an urgent need to pick up the pace to end hunger and malnutrition by 2030. Food security and nutrition are directly or indirectly related to all the SDGs, and can be considered a prerequisite to sustainable development. Accordingly, it is the imperative of the [Compact2025](#) initiative and the [UN Decade of Action on Nutrition](#) to accelerate progress on eliminating hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2025 and pave the way for achieving all the SDGs. Compact2025 was launched to support the achievement of SDG2 and contribute to the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, which was launched during the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2).

Overcoming the multiple burdens of malnutrition, i.e. stunting, wasting, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity, and diet-related non-communicable diseases, will require cohesive and integrated strategies that go beyond business as usual. Governments and policy makers will therefore need to invest in double and triple duty actions.

These strategies need to influence all parts of the food system to ensure equitable distribution of food as well as provide access to and availability of healthy diets for all. Food systems collectively encompass all elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructure and institutions) and activities across the food chain from production, processing, distribution, preparation through to consumption of food. Africa and Asia, together home to the largest numbers of the hungry and malnourished in the world, are in the midst of a rapid nutrition transition where hunger and obesity exist side by side. Indeed, obesity is rising faster than undernutrition is declining. Latin America and the Middle East are witnessing rapid increases in overweight and obesity, particularly among children and women.

Strategies to reduce malnutrition require a twin-track approach.

- The first track consists of direct actions to immediately tackle hunger and the multiple burdens of malnutrition for the neediest, such as strengthening social protection and focusing on vulnerable populations, indigenous communities and women, improving consumer education, and working with vulnerable populations and indigenous communities. Therefore, eliminating malnutrition means bringing all sectors to the table and having a wide-ranging approach that brings together nutrition driven policies and interventions.
- The second track includes measures to improve access to nutritious food that contribute to healthy diets and address the root causes of hunger and malnutrition. It includes policies to reduce rural poverty by strengthening the capacities of family farmers and generating on-farm and off-farm employment; diversifying agriculture; building resilience to climate change and

natural disasters; addressing plant, animal and aquatic health and food safety challenges; reducing food loss and waste, improving consumer education; managing urbanization sustainably and designing new approaches for delivering nutrition to dynamic and changing food environments in rapidly-growing cities.

Evidence shows that progress can be accelerated by:

- **Learning from impactful interventions:** Countries such as Brazil, China, Ghana, Peru, Thailand, and more recently Bangladesh have achieved impressive reductions in hunger and undernutrition. They have the right mix of cross-sectoral strategies and are successfully mainstreaming nutrition across the food system in multiple ways. Learning from these accomplishments—and challenges such as persistent inequality—is critical to accelerate progress. On the other hand, the rates of reduction in undernutrition in many countries such as Indonesia and Philippines are decelerating and even regressing. It is also important to acknowledge that many countries, across the income spectrum, are facing a growing challenge of overweight and obesity. Sharing experiences between these countries and communities can shorten the learning curve for other countries and communities.
- **Exploring new ideas and innovations:** There is an expanding tool box of options that can be used to develop a portfolio of food security- and nutrition-relevant policies and interventions in specific contexts and considering the needs of the more nutritionally vulnerable population groups. Identifying new ideas, testing and implementing innovations can be game changers for food security and nutrition. For example, integrating behavior change communication (BCC) into nutrition interventions and regulatory measures such as targeted taxation that make nutritious foods such as fruits and vegetables cheaper as well as trade policies, and consumer education can be impactful; tackling climate change and food security and nutrition simultaneously could be a win win approaches.
- **Leveraging the power of multisectoral collaboration:** The understanding that nutrition for all cannot be achieved by governments alone and that partnerships with private sector, academia and civil society are vital for success is evident from declarations at the highest level in many multilateral fora and regional bodies. We cannot break hunger and end all forms of malnutrition if we don't break silos. Working together across ministries and sectors including agriculture, health, education, women's empowerment, urban development, social protection, information and communication technologies (ICT) and many others can transform food systems and develop a conducive environment for rapid advancements for food security and nutrition. This includes new and innovative business models and finance mechanisms that align the interests of the private sector with reducing hunger and all forms of malnutrition.
- **Strengthening the knowledge base:** Analyzing the underlying causes of successes and failures and the accelerating actions needed for progress can give us the knowledge to overcome

roadblocks to progress. Strategies that contribute to producing more food with concomitant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, making more food available by reducing food loss and waste and enhancing food and nutrition security in the global urban food system agenda need to be developed. There is also a critical need to develop more robust metrics for assessing the quality of food systems and environments.

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) propose to organize a **global conference to accelerate progress to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition**. During the event, distinguished decision makers, practitioners, and other stakeholders will **share evidence and lessons learned** from around the world on food and agriculture system transformation for reducing hunger and malnutrition. They will **explore opportunities for scaling up successful actions** and **stimulating innovations that can disrupt business-as-usual** to build further momentum and accelerate progress.

The proposed global learning event specifically aims to achieve the following:

- Take stock of progress or the lack of it in reducing all forms of malnutrition and food insecurity globally
- Understand the reasons for the varying degrees in progress in reducing malnutrition in countries with the aim of drawing lessons from their experiences
- Identify the innovations and opportunities for scaling up action to meet the SDG2 to end hunger, and promote sustainable development by 2030 including, among others by
  - developing evidence-based policy measures and regulatory instruments aimed at well characterized entry points for mainstreaming nutrition through agriculture and food systems
  - identifying the most promising innovations (techniques, approaches, policies, investments, institutional mechanisms) for scaling up impact of interventions on FSN;
  - facilitating investment actions that ensure availability and affordability of safe, healthy and diverse diets, including through constructing partnerships with industry for product innovation and healthy food formulations
  - adopting tools and approaches to nudge and encourage consumer demand for nutritious food
  - building accountability, resilience and equity in the food system

The global event will feature a wide range of plenary sessions, debates, presentations of evidence-based analysis, rapid fire presentations, roundtable and panel discussions, and side events. These sessions will be live-streamed and interactive to garner participation from the global community. IFPRI and FAO together will share information on their websites about the event and engage and interact with participants leading up to the event. Social media will be a central part of the communication strategy leading up to, during, and following the global event. A public affairs engagement strategy will aim to link event outcomes and outputs with decision makers.

An Acceleration Fair will be launched alongside the event to showcase new ideas, approaches, and technologies for transforming food systems to accelerate progress. The Acceleration Fair will feature exhibit booths, displays of digital posters and videos, Twitter reels, a presentation stage, and informal



discussion groups to fully engage participants using a wide variety of media. Following the conference, the Acceleration Fair will feed into FAO learning platforms and the Compact2025 Knowledge & Innovation hub, which will provide online access for interactive knowledge exchange and share lessons with a global audience.

### Event logistics

The global event is envisioned from **November 28–30, 2018**. It will take place in **Bangkok, Thailand**, which was chosen due to its accessibility from Asian and African countries and to regional hubs of development partners. Moreover, Thailand has been a role model as a country that has accelerated progress in reducing hunger and undernutrition.

### Participants

High-level leaders from Africa, Asia and the Pacific including Compact2025 focal countries Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Malawi and Rwanda and from Latin America and the Middle East are expected to participate. The event is expected to gather approximately 400 people.

### Advisory committee

An Advisory Committee comprising a global group of recognized experts and practitioners on food security and nutrition has been formed. Together they will provide guidance on conference themes, participants, and background materials.

### Partners and sponsors

The global event is envisioned to be jointly organized by IFPRI and FAO. We will seek support from a wide range of development partners as well as from the private sector.

### Event outputs and outcomes

This global event will base its agenda on a number of solid evidence-based reports assessing different pathways to accelerate progress. The event will produce many outputs, including a book, and information tools such as videos and slide decks. It is foreseen to summarize the results of the conference in a brief called “The Bangkok Accelerators” that describes the key lessons learned and actions needed to speed up the end of hunger and malnutrition. The event will also build toward the creation of a network for cross-sectoral dialogue, information sharing, coordination, advocacy, and action, both at the global and country levels.

