



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

# FAO and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals

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## Key FAO messages:

- The Sustainable Development Goals offer a vision of a fairer, more prosperous, peaceful and sustainable world in which no one is left behind.
- In food - the way it is grown, produced, consumed, traded, transported, stored and marketed - lies the fundamental connection between people and the planet, and the path to inclusive and sustainable economic growth.
- Without rapid progress in reducing and eliminating hunger and malnutrition by 2030, the full range of Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved. At the same time, reaching the other SDGs will pave the way for ending hunger and extreme poverty. We can advance faster if we work together.
- The battle to end hunger and poverty must be principally fought in rural areas, which is where almost 80 percent of the world's hungry and poor live. To do this, we need to show a strong political will while also investing in the critical agents of change – smallholders, family farmers, rural women, fisher folk, indigenous communities, youth and other vulnerable or marginalized people.
- It is possible to eradicate hunger by 2030. This requires a combination of pro-poor investments in sustainable agriculture and rural development and social protection measures to immediately lift people out of chronic undernourishment and poverty.
- There are more people to feed with less water, farmland and biodiversity. But the world produces enough food for all. We need to transform our current input-heavy food systems to make them more sustainable – including reducing food waste and loss – through better management and improved techniques in agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry. Agriculture also has a major role to play in combating desertification and other negative impacts of climate change.
- With its expertise and resources, FAO is well positioned to support countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, most of which are related to FAO's work. We cannot afford to miss the opportunity of becoming the Generation Zero Hunger.

There is more than enough food produced today to feed everyone in the world, yet close to 800 million are chronically hungry. As the affordability of food largely relates to income, ensuring access to food remains one of the key pillars of food security and the wider anti-poverty agenda.



## SDG1 – End Poverty

### 1 NO POVERTY



#### FACT BOX

- Almost 80 percent of the world's extreme poor live in rural areas where most are dependent on agriculture.
- Agriculture is the single largest employer in the world.
- Agricultural growth in low-income and agrarian economies is at least twice as effective as growth in other sectors in reducing hunger and poverty.

The battle to end poverty must be fought also in rural areas, where people depend directly or indirectly on farming, fisheries or forestry for incomes as well as food. Hunger is no longer an issue of insufficient global supplies, but mainly of lack of access to the means to produce or purchase food.

Investing in rural development, establishing social protection systems, building rural-urban linkages and focusing on boosting the incomes of the critical agents of change – smallholder family farmers, foresters, fisher folk, rural women and youth – is key to achieving inclusive and equitable growth while tackling the root causes of poverty and hunger. Improving rural livelihoods will also curb rural-urban migration and increased urban poverty.



The hundreds of millions of people who manage agricultural and food systems constitute the largest group of natural resource managers on earth. The daily management decisions of those who farm, keep livestock, fish, manage forests, and run agribusinesses are key to global food security and the health of the world's ecosystems.

## SDG2 – Zero Hunger

2 ZERO HUNGER



### FACT BOX

- The number of undernourished has fallen by 216 million since 1990–92, but one in nine people on the planet still suffer from hunger.
- Only a small fraction of the around 800 million hungry have access to some form of social protection.
- Malnutrition exacts high economic and social costs on society. While two billion people do not consume enough vitamins and minerals, obesity rates have doubled over the past 30 years. Some 1.4 billion people are overweight, and 500 million obese.

A dedicated global goal, SDG2, based on a comprehensive approach to tackling food insecurity and malnutrition while promoting sustainable agriculture is an important step to achieving zero hunger and ushering in a new era of sustainable development.

Feeding a growing global population while nurturing the planet will be a monumental challenge, but it can be achieved by transforming food systems and agriculture, embracing sustainable living and working practices, improving governance and securing the political will to act.

Given the mounting pressure on global ecosystems, the food production increase must be achieved in a sustainable and environmentally sound way. Recent evidence suggests that climate change, biodiversity loss and other pressures have already reached rates of change that threaten the capacity of the Earth's ecosystems.



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## SDG12 – Sustainable consumption and production

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



Every year, the world loses or wastes about a third of the food it produces. To feed the world sustainably, producers need to grow more food while reducing negative environmental

impacts such as soil, water and nutrient loss, greenhouse gas emissions, and degradation of ecosystems. Consumers must be encouraged to shift to nutritious and safe diets with a lower environmental footprint.



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# Achieving zero hunger and ending poverty by 2030

**Ending poverty and hunger is viable and affordable.** Up to now, there has been insufficient investment specifically targeting the food security and nutrition of the extreme poor, who are largely rural people. A new study by FAO, IFAD and WFP - the UN Rome-based agencies, estimates the cost of additional investments needed to eliminate extreme poverty and hunger to be US\$265bn per year between 2016 and 2030, which is equivalent to 0.31% of global GDP.

A combination of investments in social protection and additional pro-poor development is the best way to quickly take people out of hunger and extreme poverty. Social protection, when combined with rural development policies and targeted nutrition initiatives, supports farmers and other poor rural households in overcoming financial constraints and better managing risks, with positive impacts on food production and farm-level investment in agriculture.

Programmes such as school feeding, cash transfer and health care provide some form of income security and access to better nutrition, health care, education and decent employment to people living in challenging and often hazardous environments.

The investment in pro-poor development helps to sustain growth of employment and incomes. As the incomes of the poor increase due to the returns on the additional pro-poor investment, the amount of social protection needed to close the poverty gap declines accordingly.

## AGENTS OF CHANGE

Policies directed towards these critical agents of change have the potential to produce dramatic and lasting effects on the economies of developing countries, transforming people into investors and stewards of the environment.

### Rural women

Women make up almost half the agricultural labour force in developing countries, but they own less land and lack access to resources. If women are more involved in decision-making, and if they had the required and needed access as men to productive and financial resources, income, education and services, agricultural yields would increase and the number of poor and hungry people would fall.

### Smallholders and family farmers

Investing in small producers, family farmers, fisherfolk, livestock breeders, forest users, rural workers and indigenous peoples can promote growth and development in rural areas. Increasing their access to resources, employment and incomes will lead to better food security and nutrition. At the same time, it helps ensure sustainable stewardship of the planet's natural resources, raises productivity and contributes to national economic growth.

### Investors in roads, markets and infrastructure

The majority of people in developing nations still live in rural areas. Investment in rural infrastructure – roads, transportation, electrification, communication - diversifying rural employment and improving rural-urban linkages can contribute to a more interconnected, inclusive and vibrant society while slowing the exodus of rural people to cities.

### Vulnerable people

Many of the world's poor and hungry live in areas prone to natural disasters or protracted conflict. These crises directly affect food access and production, undermining efforts to eradicate hunger, malnutrition and poverty, and to achieve sustainable development. Resilience policies, which range from rehabilitating flood-damaged waterways to planting climate-resilient crops and developing capacities, can sustain the livelihoods of the most vulnerable.

### Policy-makers

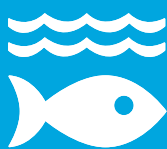
A strong entrepreneurial spirit already exists in the rural sector, where small-scale producers invest much more in agriculture than governments, donors and private enterprises combined. Policies and public investments must increase smallholders' investment capacity and access to finance, participation in decision-making processes, rights to land tenure and access to technology and innovation. Multi-stakeholder platforms, like the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), can play a crucial role in policy guidance and accountability.



# Moving beyond pure conservation to sustainable use of natural resources is essential to ensure the long-term survival of our planet and its people.

## SDG14 – Oceans, Seas and Marine resources

14 LIFE BELOW WATER



### FACT BOX

- Worldwide nearly three billion people receive 20 percent of their daily animal protein intake from fish.
- About 29 percent of commercially important assessed marine fish stocks are overfished and 61 percent fully fished.

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A comprehensive approach to fisheries and aquaculture targeting small-scale artisanal fishers is well captured in SDG14. Sustainable management of ocean ecosystems is imperative for ensuring sustainable fisheries. Stewardship must balance priorities between growth and conservation, and between industrial and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture, ensuring equitable benefits for communities.

Aquaculture is the fastest-growing food sector. If it is developed in a regulated and environmentally and socially responsible way, aquaculture intensification has the potential to produce the fish needed to meet the demand for safe and highly nutritious food by a growing population.

## SDG15 – Life on land

15 LIFE ON LAND



### FACT BOX

- Forests make vital contributions to biodiversity; they act as a source of food, medicine and fuel for more than a billion people.
- Mountains supply more than half of humankind with water.

- A third of farmland is degraded, up to 75 percent of crop genetic diversity has been lost and 22 percent of animal breeds are at risk.

- Soil is non-renewable – its loss is not recoverable within a human lifespan.

The sustainable use and management of terrestrial ecosystems, forests, mountains, land and soils and biodiversity is well articulated in the composition of SDG15. Forests contribute to decent livelihoods for millions while providing clean air and water, conserving biodiversity and mitigating climate change. Forests have the potential to absorb significant amounts of carbon emissions in their biomass, soils and products. In principle, they can store them in perpetuity.

While modern food systems are heavily dependent on fossil fuels, sustainable forests provide a renewable way to build, heat and furnish. Wood grows back and well-managed forests grow forever. Natural, recyclable, reusable and biodegradable, wood is a vital part of any sustainable future, a solution for infrastructure and energy needs.



## Food-Water-Energy nexus

A growing global population with accelerating urbanization and a deteriorating natural resource base means more people to feed with less water, farmland and rural labour. Satisfying expected increases in water, energy and food needs requires a shift to more sustainable consumption and production approaches, with agriculture and food systems made more efficient and sustainable.

### SDG6 – Water

#### 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



How to increase food production using less water is one of the great challenges of the future. Crops and livestock use 70 percent of all water withdrawals and up to 95 percent in some developing countries.

By 2025, 1.8 billion people are projected to be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity.

### SDG7 – Energy

#### 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



Energy has a key enabling role in achieving food security and better nutrition. Energy prices influence food prices. Food systems, which currently consume 30 percent of the world's energy, will gradually

need to decouple from fossil fuel dependence to deliver more food with less and cleaner energy.

### SDG13 – Combat Climate change

#### 13 CLIMATE ACTION



Agriculture has a major role to play in responding to climate change. While temperature rises pose a real threat to global food production, investments in all sectors of agriculture can simultaneously support climate change adaptation

and mitigation while improving rural people's livelihoods.



**FAO is a specialized UN agency with unique expertise in the three dimensions of sustainable development. FAO can support the implementation of a transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that will see people interact harmoniously with the planet's ecosystems and benefit from their services, maintaining and sustainably using biodiversity and all natural resources for present and future generations.**

## What FAO is doing

We support governments and development partners to design the right policies, programmes and legal frameworks that promote food security and nutrition. We also assist countries seeking to access public and private funding for agriculture and rural development.

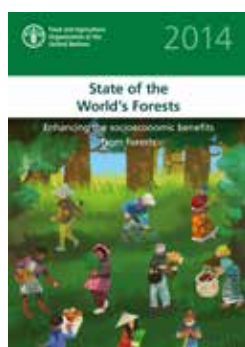
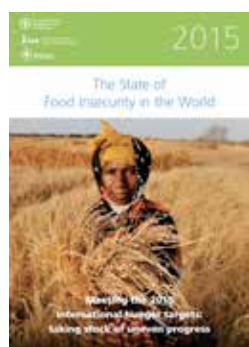
FAO has identified five Strategic Objectives to sharpen its focus on fighting hunger and to create more sustainable food systems. This puts FAO in a strong position to support countries that are taking the lead in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. Through its international expertise FAO is also well positioned to assist broad regional and international partnerships, including South-South cooperation, required to achieve zero hunger by 2030.

### FAO's Strategic Objectives are:

1. Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition
2. Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable
3. Reduce rural poverty
4. Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems
5. Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises

### List FAO flagship publications (related to monitoring)

- The State of Food Insecurity in the World: [www.fao.org/publications/sofi](http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi)
- The State of the World's Forests: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/sofo>
- The State of Food and Agriculture: <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa>
- The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture: <http://www.fao.org/fishery/sofia>
- The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets: <http://www.fao.org/publications/soco/en/>





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*“The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals hunger targets by many countries shows that we can indeed eliminate the scourge of hunger in our lifetime. This is at the very heart of the new sustainable development agenda: freeing the world of poverty and hunger, and leaving no one behind. We can do it. We can be the Zero Hunger generation.”*

*José Graziano da Silva - FAO Director-General*

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FAO has been actively engaged in the post-2015 development agenda process, supporting Member States and all stakeholders by contributing expert technical knowledge based on the Organization's vision of a world free of hunger and malnutrition where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner.

FAO will continue to work with all Member States and relevant actors towards implementing and monitoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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