

FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

DID YOU KNOW ...?

– To have access to affordable food that promotes health and good nutrition remains a major international challenge to a growing global population. However, **we live in a world with a basic incoherence**: 815 million people are starving in a global population of 7.8 billion people, while the sum of currently produced food would feed nearly 12 billion people and 1/3 of all food is lost or wasted.

– Food and nutritional insecurity is a cause and **an effect of poverty**: if, on the one hand, malnutrition perpetuates poverty and deprivation, on the other, poverty exacerbates malnutrition and generates food insecurity. Unsustainable food production models, imbalances in distribution and access, environmental degradation, resource scarcity and climate change, food waste and unsustainable consumption patterns are among the multitude of factors that affect development prospects, while being influenced by the pursued models of development.

– **Smallholder farmers** provide over 80% of the food in the world, but more than 70% of the extremely poor are in rural areas, where a family or small-scale farming prevails. The need for investment in integrated rural development is proven by the **potential of agriculture as an engine for poverty reduction**, employment generation and the promotion development for the poorest sectors of the population.

– The overall framework for the promotion of food and nutritional security in the world has evolved particularly after the 2007-8 food crisis and in particular **with FAO's guidelines in these matters, the work of the Committee on World Food Security and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** (SDG-2, specifically on this subject, is interdependent with almost all of the goals).

– The **CPLP strategic and institutional framework** has been an evolution only in the framework of the regional organisations, although with the inherent difficulties of implementation.

– Although the Portuguese cooperation has never had a sector of priority action in nutrition and food security, neither in terms of policy nor of resources, it has been able to develop some relevant projects to the development of partner countries in priority areas. In recent years, public institutional cooperation lost its capacity and the critical mass of knowledge in this area has decreased. There is also a reliance on external financing and delegated cooperation.

– The **incoherencies identified in international and European activities concerning the interconnection** between food security and development are related to the divestment of the development sector in this area and to the vagueness about the involvement of the private sector (including the inadequacy of the regulation on business and human rights). They are also related to measures that reinforce a competition that is less free and less fair in the agri-food sector and to the European policy on biofuels as well as to the effects of the Common Agricultural Policy.

INTRODUCTION

In a globalised society and interdependent world, where challenges of development are complex and multidimensional, it is necessary that public policies on migration, climate change, trade, security or food sovereignty contribute to an effective transformation and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In this framework, Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) stands as a concept, an approach and a tool for ensuring that the several sectoral policies do not collide with the efforts of eradicating poverty and promoting development at global, European, national and local level. The European Union (EU) and its Member States have ensured PCD as a political commitment and legal obligation in the framework of the Lisbon Treaty, *but will the institutions and European countries continue to pursue sectoral policies that effectively contribute to sustainable development?*

In this sense, there are major incoherencies that should be tackled: unsustainable patterns of food production, imbalances in distribution and access, environmental degradation, resource scarcity and climate change, food waste and unsustainable consumption patterns are among the multiplicity of factors that affect development prospects, while being influenced by the development models pursued. At the same time, hunger, under-nutrition and malnutrition are important aspects of food and nutritional insecurity, both a result and a hindrance to sustainable development. These problems particularly affect the poorest countries, with a higher incidence in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. However, they are rooted in a global growth paradigm that needs to be urgently redesigned.

Thus, **the promotion of more sustainable, resilient, responsible, competitive, diverse and inclusive food systems is an imperative for development**, which requires the participation of all. This is not an impossible task.

Data tell us that Humanity has today the necessary resources to eradicate extreme poverty within a generation, to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition, as established in the new Global Sustainable Development Goals. *However, are the international policies and models contributing to food and nutritional security in a perspective of development and human rights? Are the implemented policies and measures coherent and coordinated? Do they enhance the sustainable contribution of the agricultural sector for development and protect the most poor and vulnerable? How to ensure a more effective and positive connection between food and nutritional and development?*

6 Myths about Food Safety and Development

MYTH 1

**There is not enough
food to feed the world
population**

REALITY

According to FAO, all food produced worldwide would feed between 12 and 14 billion people. Therefore, there is enough food in the world today for everyone to have a proper nutrition for a healthy and productive life.

However, the production and distribution of food must be more efficient, sustainable and fair. This means supporting small-scale farmers (the majority in developing countries) and ensuring that they have adequate access to markets in order to sell their products. It is also necessary to extinguish food waste, which represents a huge loss in economic, environmental and social terms.

MYTH 2

**Hunger and
malnutrition can be
solved with an
increase in food
production**

REALITY

The increase of food production, which has been evident over the past decades, was not enough to eradicate hunger and to solve food insecurity problems. The focus on production growth has generated other problems, such as large-scale losses and food waste, increase of agriculture and food

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systems environmental footprint or degradation of natural resources such as land or water. In addition, the extensive use of fertilizers, pesticides and chemicals are increasingly threatening some of the types of crops dependent on pollination, affecting biodiversity and ecosystems, as well as human health. Thus, the focus must be more on agricultural and food systems transformation, rather than in increased production.

On the other hand, people can starve even when there is a lot of food, since the problem is often a matter of access: lack of financial conditions to buy food, inability to travel to the local markets, etc.

Finally, it is not only the quantity but also the quality of the food that is a concern. Good nutrition means having the right mix of nutrients and calories needed for a healthy development.



REALITY

It is true that hunger mainly affects developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. However, food shortages and malnutrition are major problems in the United States (where 50 million Americans face food insecurity) and in several European countries, where inequalities are increasing and social exclusion exacerbates the problems of food insecurity.

One in every nine people in the world do not have access to food, and this affects humanity as a whole. Hunger slows progress on important areas that connect nations and is affecting global development.

On the other hand, other nutritional problems have also become increasingly global. Obesity and chronic diseases that are associated with it began to affect particularly the poor in developed countries and have also extended to developing countries, taking the lives of almost 3 million people annually, in addition to placing great pressure on health systems. Nowadays, obesity is a global problem which exacerbates social inequalities and removes income and ability to work to the poorest of the society.

MYTH 4

**Hunger stems from
emergency situations.
It is caused by natural
disasters.**

REALITY

Emergencies are only responsible for 8% of world hunger, according to FAO. Therefore, actions and long-term projects, such as programs of school meals, or actions that transform the systems in the agri-food industry that improve the resilience of communities are so important to fight hunger in a sustainable way. Thus, these populations are able to ensure the subsistence means even in times of drought or mitigate the destructive effects of natural disasters.

Nature is just one of the factors that influence hunger. The proportion of food crisis that are connected to human causes is growing, including factors related to violent conflicts, dynamics of global markets, among others. In fact, hunger is in its essence a political problem, that needs to be tackled with political, economic and social responses.

MYTH 5

**Hunger is a health
problem**

REALITY

Hunger, under-nutrition and malnutrition have effects not only on people's health but also broader and multidimensional impacts in societies and economies. A high prevalence of hunger and nutritional deficiencies affects human development, hurts the economy, fosters social tensions and conflicts, affects productivity and growth, reducing significantly the potential for development. It is proven, for example, that access to adequate food is fundamental to the

education and learning process of children, influencing also later qualifications, working conditions and wages, and their contribution for the economies of their countries.

Hunger is, thus, a key framework condition for which it is possible to solve environmental, security and economic issues.



REALITY

Economic growth does not solve chronic malnutrition problems or food insecurity by itself. In fact, a non-inclusive economic growth that does not involve a reduction of inequalities and does not include concerns about the more vulnerable sectors of the society can even exacerbate food insecurity and malnutrition problems.

Food (in)security considerably influences economic growth. Countries with high levels of poverty and chronic malnutrition face major limitations to human development, which is necessary to a sustainable growth. High rates of undernutrition and malnutrition may represent a loss of 4% to 5% in the Gross Domestic Product, according to FAO. To involve actions in sectors as varied as finance, agriculture, health and nutrition, infrastructure and others, the promotion of food security has benefits not only for health, but it is a good basis for the promotion of sustained economic growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL AND GLOBAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To implement a human rights based approach with the integrated and holistic view of development of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a basis of action to improve food and nutritional security and to achieve the human right to food and adequate nutrition.
2. To strengthen global mechanisms of coordination and governance of food and nutritional security, including the Committee on World Food Security, that being the only international body with a clear mandate for food security and a platform for integration of several actors, should constitute the main reference for States and international organisations in this matter.
3. To promote the effective application of international guidelines and a systematic assessment of the compliance of such, including Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive execution of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security (2004), Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forestry Resources in the context of National Food Security (2012) and FAO's principles for sustainable agriculture, in particular in the development and implementation of strategies, programs, policies, and laws.
4. To increase commitments and funds for the empowerment of small local farmers and family agriculture, as well as to respond specifically to the needs of the most vulnerable groups to food insecurity, including the strengthening of local food systems, short food supply chains and territorial markets, traditional varieties and seed diversity. As specific support measures, emphasis should be placed on institutional capacity building, support for the formulation and implementation of adequate legislation, participatory planning and inclusive dialogue mechanisms, creation of banking services and credits, specific support for small companies, support for local cooperatives and organisations, creation of public seed banks, promotion of investments that complement the investments of the producers themselves, provision of public goods and services and definition of social protection schemes, among others.
5. To support the strengthening of connections in supply chains between producers, markets and consumers as an essential factor for the increase of income, employment creation and poverty reduction, both in rural and urban areas.
6. To support and defend environmentally sustainable agriculture models, taking advantage of the potential of agriculture and food systems to climate mitigation and adaptation, refusing the increase in agricultural productivity at the expense of the environment and the sustainable management of natural resources, both in developed and developing countries. Options such as agroecology should be more disseminated, supported and included in agricultural and rural development policies and practices, in order to increase the resilience of farmers and their communities, which is increasingly important, given the growing markets and climate volatility.
7. To support countries in the definition and implementation of administrative frameworks and inadequate legal safeguards to ensure the full protection of land ownership rights by local communities and indigenous people. In particular, to promote greater security of land

ownership through transparency of securitization and land tenure certification schemes, the recognition of land rights to legitimate and legal security regarding land tenure. The implementation of an international legal instrument on the rights of peasants and other people in rural areas, foreseen in the framework of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations, can be a relevant contribution at international level.

8. To support national policies that contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women regarding access to land and other productive resources, as well as services and funding schemes, in addition to a higher involvement of women in the design and implementation of policies in this area. In cooperation projects and programs for development in the agricultural sector, including specific – and not just abstract or formal – concerns with gender equality and the empowerment of women.

9. To make food systems more participatory and democratic at a local, national and global level. This implies, for example, strengthening the participation of actors directly involved in projects in all stages: definition, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, through a bottom-up approach that considers not only the beneficiaries but the main actors of change.

10. To ensure access to information and the existence of rigorous and independent reviews on the impacts of investments, contracts and projects in terms of social, environmental, and human rights.

11. To promote long-term actions that enable a sustained support, as well as multisectoral approaches, and multi-actor partnerships, including civil society, private sector and other partners, in order to achieve sustainable investments and long-lasting results.

12. To promote private sector social responsibility and strengthen the rules on transparency and control in this sector, as well as to encourage public-private partnerships that contribute to food and nutritional security, and provide transparent, inclusive and participatory governance mechanisms. At the international level, to promote the implementation of the principles for responsible agricultural investment – most notably the United Nations’ “Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights” and OECD’s “Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises” – and to set rules legally binding at the international level about the activity of the private sector and human rights.

13. To strengthen statistical capacity and data and information collection in this area as the basis for the definition of more coherent policies. To define and apply indicators on sustainable food systems, which go beyond the classic measures of agricultural productivity, and to include measures which matter for long-term development as the health of ecosystems, the interactions between agriculture and the economy more generally, the sustainability of the outputs, the resilience of communities, among others.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION

14. To ensure that the implementation of the EU policy framework for food security and nutrition is according to the guidelines of the Committee on World Food Security and that it is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, including nutrition and resilience to climate change as central aspects of the EU's support in this matter.

15. To put food and nutrition security at the top of the priorities in the dialogue with partner countries, considering the programming of aid in the context of each country and the underlying causes to food insecurity. The strengthening of this sector as the focal point of the bilateral cooperation is especially important in countries facing food crises or suffering from chronic food insecurity.

16. To maintain the integrity of development assistance in the agricultural sector as an instrument for the eradication of poverty and the promotion of sustainable development.

17. To give priority to food security and to small-scale agriculture in development cooperation, in the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework. This should continue to be a sector of priority intervention and the funds should be strengthened. Public incentives and financing to agroecological practices should also be increased.

18. The Common Agricultural Policy must consider its impacts on global development, food security, access to and control of natural resources by local communities, and on small producers in the poorest countries, including a regular mandatory monitoring on these impacts. It should also be more specifically connected to trade and environmental policy, for example by complementing the definition of business rules for the agricultural sector and by monitoring its impact on the world's natural resources. Finally, it should contribute to building a new food system in Europe that integrates all dimensions of sustainable development and contributes effectively to the 2030 Agenda, at internal and external levels.

19. To define more clearly the parameters of the private sector involvement in development cooperation and to improve mechanisms that promote the private sector's responsible participation; to ensure that this involvement is not at the expense of small producers and respects the principles of aid effectiveness to development. Mixed funds (blended finance) and other support in this area should only be implemented when there is an added value to development goals, when it is clear the minimisation of social and environmental risks and when this involvement does not contribute to the weakening of the public sector.

20. To ensure that the impact on human rights is systematically included in all EU instruments, in particular those involving the private sector, business and agribusiness. In particular, to reformulate EU's Plan of Foreign Investment in order to reinforce transparency and social and environmental standards, prioritising in agriculture a "lens" of the human right to adequate food.

21. To reframe the policy of biofuels/agrofuels, so as to ensure that the direct and indirect impacts of energy policy on land use at global level are monitored, that this does not contribute to the phenomena of land grabbing and human rights violations in developing countries. On one hand, it is necessary to apply the existing rules, so that European banks, pension funds and European insurance companies do not take advantage of the omissions or “grey areas” of the law to engage in speculation on food and on little transparent investment in land in the poorest countries. On the other hand, the setting of stringent conditions to a sustainable cultivation, the application of a unique certification scheme in the EU for sustainable palm oil or the creation of a binding regulatory framework which ensures that all the supply chains of importers of agricultural products are traceable up to the source of raw materials are among some of the recommendations to achieve a fully sustainable supply chain of palm oil until 2020 (as per the goals defined by the EU itself).

22. To recognise and reinforce the essential role of public investment and legal frameworks, and institutional arrangements that promote food and nutrition security in developing countries. This implies, in particular: to support the governments of these countries in order to create conducive conditions for inclusive agricultural processing, to give sustained support to legal frameworks and institutional protection of small farmers, to strengthen public policies and to assist African countries when implementing the commitment to assign 10% of their national budgets to the agricultural sector.

23. In the implementation of the cooperation with partner countries, to bet on multi-sectoral approaches (in particular by the strengthening of joint programming), on the improvement of the coordination between the EU and its Member States and with partner countries (including their complementarity on the ground) and in the reinforcement of the communication of the results and lessons learned, with a focus on the real impact of the projects on food and nutrition security.

Building resilience of rural-based livelihoods, and supporting agriculture sectors, including livestock and fisheries, are fundamental actions to save lives now and in the future. To face this enormous challenge, as well as many others to achieve sustainable development, we need to act together and immediately. (...) A better, safer and more peaceful world can only be achieved with the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.

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