

# 2021 HLPF

Thematic review preparatory meeting

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## Breakout session on SDG2

Progress and challenges in achieving  
Zero Hunger in the context of COVID-19

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# What is the current status of the Goal or target, in terms of actual measured progress and trends?

## What has changed since the last time this Goal was reviewed at the HLPF?



### World hunger was still increasing

- Up by **10 million people in one year** and nearly **60 million in five years** to 690 million in 2019. (SOFI/State of Food Security and Nutrition, 2020).
- Globally, about **2 billion people are considered moderately or severely food insecure** according to the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (SOFI, 2020).
- **More than 3 billion people in the world cannot afford a healthy diet** (SOFI, 2020)
- Also worth recalling that **acute food insecurity in 55 countries in food crisis is also on the rise**: 155 million in 2020, nearly 20 million more than in 2019 (Global Report on Food Crises,

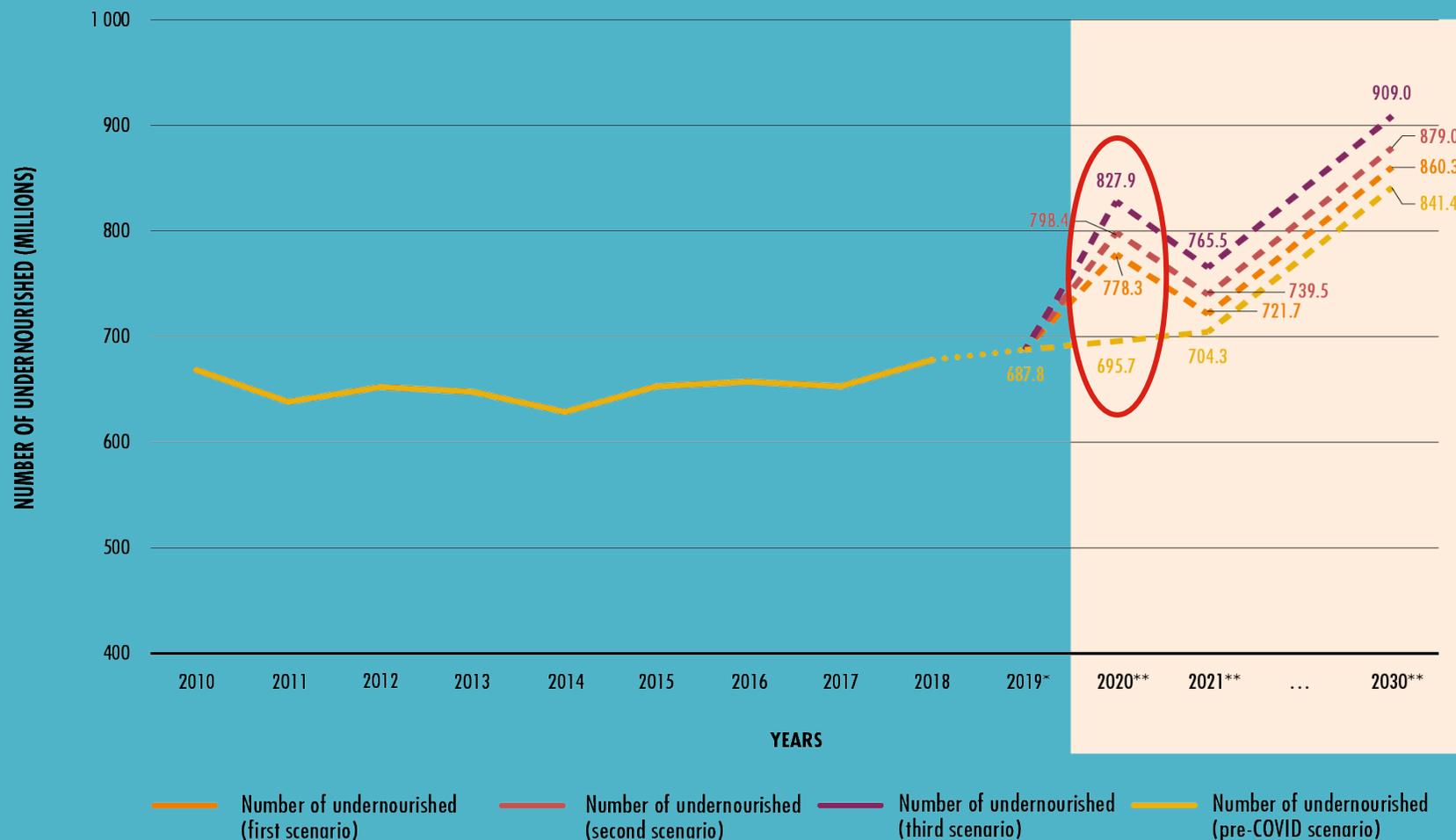
### Looking beyond hunger: The world is not on track to defeat malnutrition

- Globally, the burden of malnutrition in all its forms remains a challenge. While we saw some progress in **child stunting and breastfeeding** in 2019, child overweight was not improving, and adult obesity was on the rise
- According to estimates, in 2019, 21.3 percent (144 million) of children under 5 years of age were **stunted**, 6.9 percent (47 million) **wasted** and 5.6 percent (38.3 million) **overweight**.

### COVID-19 exacerbated trends



# How the COVID-19 pandemic may have affected hunger in the world?



Source: FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2020. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020. Transforming food systems for affordable healthy diets*. Rome, FAO.

# What deviations in progress from what was expected at the previous review (including due to COVID-19)?

- **Second and third waves** re-ignited restrictive policies, deepened economic slowdowns/recessions
- **Uneven distribution of vaccines** will underline uneven progress out of the global recession
- **Social and economic fallout will take longer to reverse:** record levels of unemployment, poverty and disrupted livelihoods in low income countries
- **Initial sharp reduction of remittances the wake of COVID-19,** but despite their resilience afterwards, reduced **remittances** due to global recession...will take time to recover

## MIXED RESULTS REGARDING AGRI-FOOD SECTORS

- Governments and partners have protected and supported the **functioning of agri-food sectors**
- Agri-food trade and supply chain disruptions have been **less than originally feared.**
- Exporters relying on energy and mineral exports have seen sharp declines in export revenues
- **Food prices** have nevertheless increased especially in urban areas as a result of the successive restrictions pushing poor households into further reducing nutritious diets
- **Negative coping strategies** by vulnerable groups (nutritional choices, selling of assets) will have long-term implications
- **Smallholder and family farmers** in many countries have been unevenly hit by lack of access to inputs and markets as a result of restrictions despite government efforts



# Additional obstacles or opportunities in implementation including through interlinkages with other Goals, and connections to related processes?

- **Re-purposing of development funding to face the emergency will have long-term consequences** for growth and poverty reduction if funds are not replenished
- **Inequalities exacerbated** by COVID-19 compromise sustainable development, exacerbate social segmentation and prevent large parts of the population from rising out of poverty.
- The **pandemic has fallen unevenly on women** in their role as family keepers and small-scale, mostly informal entrepreneurs (SDG5) which will delay efforts to make substantial gains in household nutrition and food security
- **Response and recovery efforts not always green:** Efforts towards “Green Development” put on hold in many low-income countries in favour of more “traditional” “green revolution” technologies to boost food production. Major challenge will be to strengthen **incentives and capacities to re-launch the sustainability agenda.**
- **Multiple environmental and social injustices converge upon small-scale farmers (up to 2 ha),** that represent over 80% of farms worldwide and, despite producing roughly 35% of the world’s food on 12% of the agricultural land, are among those who suffer worst from hunger and poverty.



# Lessons learned during the pandemic for the way forward

## Lessons learned to combat COVID-19 and the socioeconomic effects of restrictions:

- **Working across sectors and institutional stakeholders** (ministries, private sector, civil society) this approach made a difference when used during the pandemic and should continue beyond it.
- A **social agenda** is an essential part of sustainable food system transformation
- **One Health:** Pandemics are in part the result of encroachment of habitats and unsustainable production/consumption practices. A twin-track approach is needed to modify consumption patterns and production practices across the food supply chain.
- **Malnutrition** in all its forms is a key factor in morbidity and mortality due to COVID-19.
- **Resilience of agri-food supply chains** is not always directly related to their length and complexity: a more nuanced reality
- Maintain an **open agri-food trade system** essential to strengthen resilience of food systems and individuals
- Information systems at the heart of early **preparedness and action but are missing in most low income countries examined.**



# Means of Implementation

**A comprehensive and integrated agenda to put agri-food systems on a sustainable path should involve a combination of tools, actors and solutions adapted to diverse contexts as per SDG 17.**

- **Financing the recovery:** agri-food systems had to be at the core of the green recovery plans, public expenditure reviews on the agri-food sector, strengthening rural financial markets, expanding resource base increased ODA, debt re-structuring and debt relief
- **International Cooperation and Solidarity** to ensure strengthening health and food systems, vaccine distribution, development assistance across the humanitarian-development nexus, combatting illicit flows to expand the fiscal base
- **Cooperation on Science, Technology and Innovation** to make sustainable practices within reach of low income countries and weaker groups (smallholders, MSMEs, using traditional knowledge)
- **Systemic reforms** in accordance with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, that can strengthen policy, fiscal and judicial space of developing countries for the pursuit of their food system transformation agenda.
- **Partnerships:** Closer partnership between governments and peoples' organisations (farmers, especially smallholders and family farmers, consumers, private sector across the food system, indigenous peoples)



## Guiding questions for discussion

- **What is the current status of the Goal or target, in terms of actual measured progress and trends?**
- **What has changed since the last time this Goal was reviewed at the HLPF?**
- **What deviations in progress from what was expected at the previous review (including due to COVID-19)?**
- **What are additional obstacles or opportunities in implementation, including through interlinkages with other Goals, and connections to related processes?**
- **New/promising openings for tracking progress, including from additional data sources?**
- **What are promising strategies to accelerate action (by UN and partners) towards SDG2 and to mobilize other stakeholders to advance implementation? How would one monitor action for implementing these?**

