



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2024



Full Report

Expert Group Meeting on Sustainable Development Goal 2 and its interlinkages with other SDGs¹

2024 HLPF Thematic Review

In-Person, Rome, Italy 26-27 March 2024



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Disclaimer: The recommendations expressed in this report are a summary of the contributions made by experts in the meeting and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

¹ **Websites:**

<https://sdgs.un.org/events/expert-group-meeting-sdg2-and-its-interlinkages-other-sdgs-54636>

<https://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals-helpdesk/overview/sdg-progress-and-alignment/2030-agenda-follow-up-and-review/expert-group-meeting-on-sdg-2/>

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List of acronyms

AFA - Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development

CESCR - Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

CFS - Committee on World Food Security

CGIAR - Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

COP28 - 28th Conference of the Parties

COVID-19 - Coronavirus Disease 2019

CSIPM - Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism

EAFF - Eastern Africa Farmers Federation

ECOSOC - Economic and Social Council

EGM - Experts Group Meeting

ESF - Food Systems and Food Safety Division

EU - European Union

FABLE - Food, Agriculture, Biodiversity, Land-use, and Energy Pathways Consortium

FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization

FLW - Food Loss and Waste

FS - Food System

FSN - Food Security and Nutrition

FST - Food System Transformation

FWL - Food Waste and Loss

GHG - Greenhouse Gas

HLPE - High-Level Panel of Expert in Food Security and Nutrition

HLPE-FSN - High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition

IFAD - International Fund for Agricultural Development

IGAD - Intergovernmental Authority on Development

IHL - International Humanitarian Law

INRAE - National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment

INTUC - Indian National Trade Union Congress

LAC - Latin American and Caribbean

LMCs - Lower-Middle-Income Countries

MGCY - Major Group for Children and Youth

NBSAPs - National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans

NDCs - Nationally Determined Contributions

ODI - Overseas Development Institute

SADC - Southern African Development Community

SDG - Sustainable Development Goal

SDG 2 - Sustainable Development Goal 2

SMEs - Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund

UNIDO - United Nations Industrial Development Organization

WFP - World Food Programme

WFO - World Farmers Organization

WTO - World Trade Organization

Introduction

The two-day expert meeting on Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2), convened experts to critically assess progress and outline policy recommendations. Across all sessions, a recurring theme emerged: the urgent need for integrated, multisectoral approaches that address the complex, interrelated challenges of achieving SDG 2.

This report brings together the insights and reflections presented by the lead discussants and the interventions from the experts, while capturing the key "setting the scene" perspectives offered by the moderators of each session.

Official Opening

FAO Director-General, Dr QU Dongyu emphasized the necessity for a unified, expert-driven approach to tackle the triad challenges of food availability, accessibility, and affordability. Highlighting the intricate balance required to foster efficient, inclusive, and resilient agrifood systems, FAO Director-General advocated for evidence-based, solution-oriented strategies to transform crises into opportunities for food security enhancement, urging a shift towards reliable and solid data for evidence-based and scientific decisions and interventions.

Mrs Paula Narvaez, ECOSOC President, sent a message to the participants urging the experts to bring innovative solutions to the table with practical next steps.²

The Under Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr Li Junhua addressed the experts' group through a video message, spotlighting the critical crossroads at which the world stands, with a mere 15% of SDG targets on track. He underlined the exacerbating effects of recent adversities, including pandemics and geopolitical tensions, on global hunger levels, calling for transformative, scalable solutions and bold, multidimensional ideas from experts to reverse these trends.

IFAD President Mr Alvaro Lario painted a stark picture of the current state of hunger, pointing out the alarming lack of progress and the pressing need to rethink agrifood systems operations. Mr Lario stressed the significance of investing in smallholders and SMEs, highlighting the enormous

² Full message: <https://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals-helpdesk/accelerate/article-detail/pecosco-message-to-participants-of-the-expert-group-meeting-on-sdg-2/en>

cost of inaction, and advocating for collective, scaled-up efforts to eradicate hunger through comprehensive, sustainable initiatives.

Session 1. Target 2.1 - End Hunger

The session on Target 2.1, moderated by Mr David Laborde, Director of the Agrifood Economics Division at FAO delved into the alarming rise in hunger and food insecurity, with 600 million people still hungry and 2.4 billion food insecure, a situation exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The discussions revealed a pressing need for specific, tailored solutions to address conflict and climate change, the primary drivers of food insecurity, underscoring the importance of data-driven policy making and the integration of multidimensional approaches to ensure food security for all.

This session analysed recent trends related to food security and mapped major interconnected challenges and drivers to remove the root causes of hunger and poverty. The discussion highlighted the importance of enforcing a rights-based, holistic approach to transforming agrifood systems to address hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity, particularly in marginalized and vulnerable populations. Discussions centred on the importance of normative instruments, data-driven policy-making, and inclusive collaboration to ensure equitable food distribution and address regional challenges. Key questions aimed to assess progress, highlight success stories, and identify effective policies and investments to accelerate efforts to end hunger.

Lead discussants, including Mr Michael Windfuhr from the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) and the German Institute for Human Rights, Mr Abdi Fidar from IGAD Food Security, Nutrition and Resilience Analysis Hub, and Professor Sheryl L Hendriks from the Natural Resources Institute at the University of Greenwich, advocated for a rights-based, holistic approach to agrifood system transformation. Emphasizing the critical roles of governance, data, and international cooperation, they called for policies that prioritize marginalized populations, enhance access to nutritious food, and foster resilience against environmental stresses.

Mr Michael Windfuhr emphasized the crucial need for normative instruments to guide policies towards achieving sustainable agrifood systems. He advocated for a comprehensive approach that considers the multidimensionality of agrifood systems and incorporates a rights-based framework to prioritize marginalized populations. Mr Windfuhr highlighted the importance of data for informed policy-making, the necessity of open debate to improve governance, and the role of

institutions in providing essential services like nutrition, infrastructure, and education. He underscored the need for localizing agrifood systems to make them work for rural communities and stressed the importance of accountability in policy implementation. Mr Windfuhr called for government action to scale up market access, food products, and the effective application of voluntary guidelines on gender equality, fisheries, and finance. He pointed out the need for international cooperation and the integration of global declarations to strengthen the dissemination and application of policy instruments. Mr Windfuhr's vision is for a transformation towards rights-based, sustainable agrifood systems that leave no one behind, supported by comprehensive policy guidance and community inclusion.

Mr Abdi Fidar highlighted the acute challenge of hunger and malnutrition in Africa, particularly in the Horn and Central regions, where over 58 million people are food insecure. He attributed this crisis to several factors, including financial constraints, climate change, the locust outbreak of 2019, consecutive years of average rainfall, and the impacts of COVID-19, which have exacerbated malnutrition, affecting 7 million children. Mr Fidar stressed that Africa is not on track to meet SDG 2 due to these compounding issues. He called for urgent, integrated solutions and government action to address conflicts and climate change's adverse effects. Emphasizing the importance of regional cooperation, investment in agriculture, and the implementation of insurance services for agriculture to reduce vulnerability, Mr Fidar outlined a multi-faceted approach necessary to combat food insecurity and promote sustainable development across the continent.

Professor Sheryl L Hendriks stressed the growing importance of food security, particularly in the context of the burgeoning youth populations in Asia and Africa. She advocated for a holistic approach that goes beyond basic understanding, clarifying that agrifood systems and food security are distinct but interconnected concepts. Professor Hendriks emphasized the necessity for inclusive policy-making, advocating for strategies that address waste reduction and ensure equitable food distribution. She highlighted the need for actionable, comprehensive government policies, underpinned by cross-ministerial collaboration to ensure their effective implementation. Professor Hendriks also pointed out the value of learning from countries that have successfully combated hunger through best practices. Furthermore, she called for data-driven strategies to develop successful actions against malnutrition, while noting the critical role of accountability and the need for greater humanitarian aid in conflict-affected regions of the Global South. Professor Hendriks underscored that while data is crucial for policy formulation, it

must be complemented by actionable interventions that address the immediate needs of the population.

Key messages and policy recommendations:

1. Develop and effectively implement normative instruments, including international guidelines (e.g. those developed by the Committee on World Food Security), ensuring equitable food distribution and the prioritization of marginalized communities' right to food.
2. Need to tackle root causes of poverty and structural inequalities, starting with vulnerable rural populations, and small-scale food producers and family farmers.
3. Invest in quality and disaggregation of data to properly monitor the food security situation across sectors and all segments of population.
4. Create a framework for inclusive and data driven policy-making processes to improve governance and integrate multidimensional and holistic approaches.
5. Strengthen international, regional collaboration to establish integrated solutions to address the adverse effects of conflicts and climate change.
6. Dedicate efforts to scaling up market access, improve efficiency, including reducing food loss and waste, ensuring equitable food distribution.
7. Refocus and upscale investments, including for insurance programme to build resilience, and access to climate finance for agrifood sector and rural actors.

Session 2. Target 2.2 - End all Forms of Malnutrition

Mr Mauro Brero, Senior Nutrition Adviser - Food Systems for Children, UNICEF moderated the session and started by emphasizing the critical role of healthy diet as a determinant of malnutrition and highlighting the global challenge of food poverty across income spectrums. Setting the scene, the moderator provided insights on the progress toward achieving Target 2.2. He mentioned that the world was able to reduce the prevalence of stunting among children under five years showing that progress is possible if we invest in the right evidence-based policies. However, he stressed that we are lacking behind in achieving 2.2 Target. Wasting persists at alarming rates and overweight will require a reversal in trajectory if the 2030 target is to be achieved. There is a clear need for transformative policies that span from agrifood systems, health, education to social protection to secure the right to health for all, especially children, was underscored.

The session focused on assessing progress towards achieving SDG 2.2 targets to end all forms of malnutrition, highlighting successful strategies and lessons learned. Speakers emphasized multisectoral collaboration, improved data collection, and holistic approaches to address malnutrition comprehensively. They discussed integrating traditional diets with current nutrition efforts, the importance of youth and women in strategy design, and challenges like the double burden of malnutrition and sustainability of humanitarian aid.

Ms Lara Nasreddine, Professor of Nutrition at the American University of Beirut, emphasized on strategic alignment in policies, the value of improved data, and the importance of resilience in food security. Ms Nasreddine identified that operating in isolation and fragmented approaches are ineffective. The impact of interventions on the whole food security policy relies on the synergy between various significant interventions, urging policymakers and stakeholders to adopt a multisectoral collaboration. Without understanding what people consume, especially in low-income and lower-middle-income countries, it's challenging to address food security issues. Her review pointed out the scarcity and poor quality of available data, emphasizing the necessity of consumption related data to guide policymakers with context-specific information and to ensure inclusivity. Ms Nasreddine called to increase resources for dietary data collection, especially in countries experiencing nutritional transitions and financial crises, where traditional food consumption data become outdated. The absence of timely, relevant data during sudden or prolonged crises hinders effective response. Additionally, the lack of region-specific impact assessment, as illustrated by a systemic review of 300 school-based initiatives where only 20 had monitoring and evaluation, raises questions on identifying effective strategies. Lastly, Ms Nasreddine stressed that national strategies should pivot towards understanding and integrating local and traditional diets to combat malnutrition effectively, highlighting an urgent call for collective action in building the resilience of food systems against vulnerabilities and shocks and in ensuring diets that leave no one behind.

Mr Amos Laar, Professor of Public Health Nutrition at the School of Public Health, University of Ghana, highlighted successful strategies from Senegal and Ghana aimed at combating malnutrition through community-focused health and nutrition programmes, and multi-sectoral collaboration. In Senegal, programmes at the community level have demonstrated significant impacts on nutrition and health, emphasizing the importance of targeting interventions to meet local needs. Ghana has seen the establishment of numerous platforms since 2012, such as NanuPac, which have harnessed cross-sectoral collaboration—including ministries of agriculture, health, finance, and academic institutions like the University of Ghana—for impactful

nutrition and health outcomes. These platforms have been instrumental in implementing a comprehensive package of policies, including fiscal measures, that drive the promotion of healthy diets and discourage unhealthy eating habits.

Mr Laar pointed out the necessity of multisectoral cooperation to address all forms of malnutrition effectively. Mr Laar stressed the significance of fostering sustainable consumption and production practices as fundamental to improving nutrition. This approach has been operationalized through the creation of national nutrition platforms in Ghana, which have successfully implemented initiatives such as school feeding programmes, public food procurement policies, and campaigns for healthy diets.

Mr Simon Barquera, from the National Institute of Public Health in Mexico, highlighted the global rise in obesity, stressing that it is not confined to high-income countries and is expected to significantly impact low- and middle-income countries by 2030. Mr Barquera noted the economic toll of obesity, with global GDP costs at 3% and Mexico at 6%. Mr Barquera argued that while current interventions focus on capacity development and awareness, there is a crucial need for addressing systemic structural policies and focusing on the structural drivers of malnutrition. Mr Barquera advocated for major shifts to combat all forms of malnutrition, acknowledging the environmental harm caused by the double burden of malnutrition. Emphasizing agrifood system transformation as essential, Mr Barquera outlined three key points for accelerating this change: acknowledging the double burden of malnutrition, understanding the limited progress due to complex interventions involving energy balance, nutrition, and education, and recognizing the necessity to develop a common vision and a holistic approach to address all sources of malnutrition. Achieving political support and addressing power imbalances were identified as main challenges. Mr Barquera proposed a legal framework for accountability mechanisms to monitor transnational corporations and highlighted the conflict of interest and power imbalances posed by ultra-processed food industries, underscoring the need for corrective actions in these areas.

Ms Belinda Ng, representing the Major Group for Children and Youth, emphasized the critical importance of involving youth in the design and implementation of food security and nutrition strategies. Ms Ng highlighted the need to consider gender disparities at the household level to address and understand the nuances of food consumption patterns and nutritional intake. Ms Ng stressed the necessity of gaining a comprehensive understanding of people's dietary habits to effectively tackle ongoing nutrition and food security challenges. By emphasizing the role of

traditional diets, Ms Ng suggested looking into how these can be integrated or reconciled with current nutrition efforts, pointing towards the value of traditional knowledge and practices in enhancing food security and nutritional health. Ms Ng emphasized on the need for inclusive strategies that consider the diverse needs and contributions of all community members, particularly the younger generations.

Ms Aline Mosnier, Scientific Director for the FABLE (Food, Agriculture, Biodiversity, Land-use, and Energy) Pathways Consortium, raised a question on the role of traditional diets in dietary guidelines. Ms Mosnier suggested looking into how these can be integrated or reconciled with current nutrition efforts, pointing towards the value of traditional knowledge and practices in enhancing food security and nutritional health.

Ms Akiko Suwa-Eisenmann, Chair of the High-Level Panel of Expert in Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on Food Security at the United Nations, raised concerns about the heavy burden on women who, despite being primary caregivers, increasingly participate in activities outside the home. Ms Suwa-Eisenmann noted that poverty has led poor consumers to rely on convenience and ultra-processed foods. Ms Suwa-Eisenmann also discusses that in Japan, there are examples of processed but not ultra-processed foods that can be healthy alternatives. She highlighted that current agrifood system outcomes do not promote healthy diets due mainly to affordability issues. Ms Suwa-Eisenmann emphasized the need for more data to develop interventions that can bridge this gap and support healthier dietary choices.

Ms Andrea Galante, Senior Policy Advisor for Food Security and Nutrition, Advocacy and External Engagement, World Vision International, Major Group - Together 2030, raised a point on the need to discuss interventions to access healthy diets at all ages to fill the gap between 5-19 years old.

Inaya Ezzeddine, Member of Parliament of the Republic of Lebanon pointed out the unsustainability of long-term humanitarian development aid, emphasizing that while food parcels may suffice for internally displaced individuals for 2-3 weeks, extended displacement over months poses significant challenges, indicating the need for more sustainable solutions in prolonged crises and conflict areas.

Key messages and policy recommendations:

1. Establish national platforms for cross-sectoral collaboration to align policies and interventions, focusing on food affordability, sustainable consumption and production

practices, school feeding programmes, public food procurement policies and campaigns for healthy diets.

2. Invest in comprehensive data collection on diet consumption patterns to inform evidence-based policies, ensuring no one is left behind. Develop timely data collection methods to address evolving challenges in agrifood systems.
3. Integrate the role of traditional diets in local dietary guidelines and promote community-based interventions to enhance agrifood system resilience and target the local needs.
4. Ensure multistakeholder participation, in particular the engagement of women and youth, small-holders and family farmers in in policy design to better target interventions to access healthy diets at all ages and with consideration for the nuances of food consumption and production patterns.
5. Utilize food regulation to address all forms of malnutrition, including through fiscal measures, incentives and disincentives to drive the promotion of healthy diets, and accountability mechanisms to monitor the marketing of unhealthy foods.

Session 3. Target 2.3 - Double Agricultural Productivity and Incomes of Small-Scale Food Producers

Session 3 on Target 2.3 illuminated the pivotal role of small-scale farming in achieving food security and sustainable agricultural productivity. The session was moderated by Mr Ron Hartman, Director for Global Engagement, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization at IFAD, emphasized the pivotal role of small-scale farming as the cornerstone of agrifood systems, highlighting how local food production enhances food availability. Mr Hartman advocated for the promotion of sustainable practices, underscoring their significance in fostering resilience and ensuring food security. Hartman stressed that achieving zero hunger hinges on the development of equitable and sustainable agrifood systems. Mr Hartman acknowledged the regional disparities facing small farmers in lower-middle-income countries (LMCs), who often struggle with market inclusion. Furthermore, Mr Hartman pointed out the critical need for data in supporting SDG target 2.3, emphasizing that beyond data, it's essential to identify metrics that truly reflect people's needs.

The session aimed to evaluate progress towards achieving SDG 2.3, focusing on doubling agricultural productivity and incomes for small-scale food producers. Speakers discussed the need for clear indicators and comprehensive policies to address productivity disparities, emphasized the need to ensure equitable access to land other productive resources and

services, to ensure their full contribution to agrifood system transformation. They highlighted the importance of innovation and investment in supporting small-scale farmers and addressing challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, sustainable management of resources and ecosystems. These insights underscored the importance of inclusive approaches to enhance sustainability for increased agricultural productivity and improve livelihoods and resilience of the rural and urban poor.

Mr Rachid Serraj, professor and member of the High-Level Panel of Expert in Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), critically addressed the minimal contribution of current targets to the SDGs due to significant data scarcity, labelling it as the "elephant in the room." Mr Serraj underscored the need for clear indicators to monitor agricultural productivity and explore alternative solutions. Mr Serraj mentioned that the FAO has collected data on key technical characteristics for 40 countries, focusing on labor productivity, which notably differs between small and large-scale producers. Mr Serraj highlighted that productivity in Africa has been adversely affected by drivers like El Niño, predicting lower yields for 2024. Despite an increase in maize production across 40 million hectares in Africa, yield growth has stalled, like the situation with rice, a vital staple food, where productivity remains low. Mr Serraj emphasized the importance of soil fertility and the role of agrotech in transforming agrifood systems, advocating for the inclusion of the private sector to enhance agrotech adoption. Mr Serraj urged for a comprehensive approach to policy recommendations, focusing on the entire agrifood system rather than specific sectors, and pointed out the inadequate implementation of family farming policies.

Ms Magdalena Ackermann, Co-coordinator ad interim of Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSIPM) Secretariat, emphasized the structural problems behind the increase in hunger, highlighting the crucial role of small-scale food producers in guaranteeing food access through local networks. Ms Ackermann pointed out that the world produces enough food; the real issue lies in its distribution and access. Ms Ackermann identified the overdependence on value chains and power concentration as significant obstacles to achieving an inclusive agrifood system, stressing the need for equitable land distribution. Ms Ackermann advocated for the localization of agrifood systems and the agroecological transition, which values local knowledge and solutions for global problems. She underscored the importance of governance in ensuring food security, addressing power imbalances, and mitigating environmental destruction. Ms Ackermann called for democratic participation in agrifood system transformation and stressed the necessity of creating spaces for the participation of those most affected by food insecurity.

Ms Ackermann argued that focusing solely on productivity ignores the barriers to food access, advocating for a rights-based approach to agrifood system transformation that considers both the productivity of staple foods and the diversity of diets. Ms Ackermann pointed out that structural barriers and historical challenges, exacerbated by global import and export dynamics, need to be addressed to diversify economies based on local agrifood systems and to overhaul the globally designed agrifood system rooted in colonial foundations.

Ms Silvia Caprara, representative of the World Farmers Organization (WFO), emphasized the necessity of increasing agricultural productivity in response to the growing global population. Ms Caprara highlighted the role of innovation, both from researchers and farmers, in enhancing productivity and stressed the importance of securing funding for family farming. Ms Caprara pointed out that while knowledge sharing is crucial, it is not enough; investment in training, internships, and research is also necessary. Ms Caprara advocated for recognizing the diversity among small farmers, suggesting policies should encompass a variety of crops and not just focus on one, like livestock, to support a diverse agricultural output. Ms Caprara underlined the significance of long-term projects and vision, especially for engaging the youth in agriculture, making it a viable career option to encourage their participation. Acknowledging the current poly-crisis situation, Ms Caprara emphasized the importance of providing financial support for loss and damage due to climate change impacts, indicating a need for comprehensive approaches to address the challenges faced by the agricultural sector.

Key messages and policy recommendations:

1. Nature-based solutions can enhance resilience in agriculture and increase food production while also mitigating climate change and redirecting investments towards ecosystem service provisions, such as long-term and cost-effective interventions to address water management, soil restoration, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.
2. Recognize that indicators used to measure progress on Target 2.3. do not effectively measure progress. Consider other indicators or reporting mechanisms to reflect the important role and contribution of small-scale producers, Indigenous Peoples and family farmers, who are the foundation of our agrifood systems.
3. Implement specific policies to support small-scale producers and family farmers, to address productivity disparities, support diverse agricultural output, improve market access and invest in training. Access to climate finance must also be increased to support mitigation efforts and address loss and damage due to climate change impacts.

4. Provide for inclusive governance and democratic participation in policy making, which are vital to address value chain power imbalances, promote equitable land distribution and implement sustainable agricultural approaches that promote environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic viability.

Session 4. Target 2.4 - Ensure Sustainable Food Production Systems

The session on progress towards SDG 2.4, moderated by Ms Corinna Hawkes, Director Food Systems and Food Safety Division (ESF) at FAO, highlighted the lessons learned so far in terms of progress toward achieving SDG 2.4 target to ensure sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices. The moderator revealed critical insights on the status of the indicators for the 2.4 target. Ms Hawkes informed that initially, there was optimism about measuring and collecting farm-level data to monitor progress towards this target. However, it became evident that achieving precise measurements was more complex than anticipated. The FAO Statistics Division is now seeking viable proxies to gauge progress on a global scale. Despite efforts, the consensus is that the world is not on track to meet the 2.4 target. While there have been improvements in reducing gas emissions and enhancing farmers' sustainability practices, these advances are not sufficient to achieve the desired outcomes. The discussion prompts a reflection on the lessons learned throughout the journey towards 2030, emphasizing the need for enhanced strategies to ensure the sustainability and resilience of food production systems.

This session aimed to discuss and ensure sustainable food production systems while implementing resilient agricultural practices. Speakers highlighted the role of governments and financial support for smallholder farmers and emphasized the importance of private sector innovations and government involvement in sustainable production efforts. Urban-rural linkages and regional governance structures were also stressed and transitioning to plant-rich diets and supporting sustainable food production initiatives was discussed. These insights highlighted the need for diverse approaches and collaborations to achieve resilient agricultural practices and sustainable food production systems.

Ms Elizabeth Nsimadala from the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF) emphasized the crucial role of governments in convening various stakeholders to report on and drive progress towards the SDGs. Ms Nsimadala questioned who would bear the costs of transitioning to sustainable agrifood systems, the incentives for farmers, and the role of consumers in this

financial equation. Ms Nsimadala highlighted the lack of adequate recognition for farmers, stressing the need to bring farmers to the table, noting their insufficient inclusion in critical discussions like the COP 28 Declaration on food and agriculture. Ms Nsimadala called for action beyond discourse, pointing out that less than 2.5 percent of climate finance reaches farmers, who are significantly affected by climate change. Ms Nsimadala praised IFAD's efforts in fostering partnerships at the national level but stressed the need for de-risking agriculture and intentional support for farmers in accessing finance and building capacity. Ms Nsimadala advocated for a collective effort in redefining agrifood systems transformation with smallholder farmers in mind, underlining the importance of creating a safety net for these farmers to make them more attractive to investors and ensure their active participation in consultations.

Mr Michael Keller of the International Seed Federation highlighted the importance of linking private sector innovations directly with farmers to enhance food production efficiency and sustainability. Mr Keller noted a concerning trend: young people are increasingly disinterested in pursuing careers in food production. Citing examples like extension services in Ghana, which provide farmers with the right inputs and varieties, and potato production initiatives in Tanzania that engage directly with farmers, Mr Keller underscored successful models of direct intervention. However, he expressed concerns about the lack of coordination among different donors and stakeholders, which leads to siloed efforts on the ground. Mr Keller emphasized the critical need for government involvement in the process of increasing sustainable production, pointing out the necessity of appropriate inputs, their correct usage, financing, and initiative. Mr Keller advocated for the diversification of crops as a strategy to pursue more sustainable farming practices, stressing the need for a more integrated approach to reaching and supporting farmers.

Ms Becca Jablonski from the Food Systems Institute at Colorado State University highlighted the significance of addressing SDG target 2.4 within the context of urban-rural linkages, emphasizing the momentum for urban stakeholders to influence and set food policy supporting the achievement of SDG 2.4, citing the 280 cities signing the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact as an example. In terms of challenges and opportunities, Ms Jablonski noted the frequent exclusion of farmers from urban food policy discussions due to power and income imbalances. Ms Jablonski argued against a one-size-fits-all approach, stressing that to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of interventions, it is imperative to account for the local context rather than relying solely on global models. This involves considering factors such as local conditions, socio-cultural elements of agrifood system stakeholders, and more. She underlined the importance of understanding farmers' incentives and what drives their decision-making

towards sustainable agrifood systems Ms Jablonski provided examples of successful urban-rural collaborations that leverage the power of cities to work as partners with regional farmers: in Colorado, the Denver Food Policy Council advises the mayor with policies developed by local inhabitants, incorporating both urban and rural perspectives; in São Paulo, Brazil, regional roundtables led to the creation of organizations that successfully coordinate public food supply chains across rural and urban areas. Ms Jablonski recommended the development of regional governance structures to facilitate more equitable dialogue and decision-making between farmers and urban stakeholders and municipalities, emphasizing the need for tailored approaches to sustainable agriculture and increased farmer participation in policy-making.

Ms Juliette Tronchon from ProVeg International emphasized the necessity of adopting a farm-to-fork approach that integrates farmers, consumers, and producers into decision-making processes to foster sustainable food production. Ms Tronchon provided insights on how shifting toward plant-rich diets can support the implementation of climate-friendly agricultural practices. Ms Tronchon called for an escalation in finance and funding to provide the "means of implementation" for transitioning towards sustainable practices. Ms Tronchon stressed the importance of education and dietary shifts they promote through the School Plates Programme as pivotal elements for promoting sustainable food production. Ms Tronchon provided examples of successful initiatives: The Smart Protein Project, funded by the European Union, aims to encourage farmers to cultivate protein-rich crops for human consumption. The Transformation Project supports farmers in moving away from intensive animal agriculture to crop cultivation. Additionally, the Solawi network fosters direct connections between consumers and producers, involving consumers in the production process, illustrating effective models for achieving sustainable agrifood systems.

Ms Belinda Ng from MGCY emphasized the importance of incorporating loss and damage perspectives, enhancing access to insurances, particularly micro insurances like parametric insurance, and adopting a gender-sensitive approach in adaptation financing.

Mr Abdi Fidar from IGAD posed a strategic question regarding whether to lower barriers for farmer resource access or to maintain high standards while boosting farmers' capacity. Discussions also covered the necessity of combating land degradation, desertification, improving resilience to climate change, and ensuring food security and nutrition are closely linked. The importance of representing young farmers at regional and global levels, addressing loss and damage associated

with agrifood systems, enabling access to microinsurance and financial tools, breaking gender-specific barriers, and focusing on sustainable supply alongside production were also pointed out.

Reacting to these insights from the floor, Ms Elizabeth Nsimadala proposed upgrading farmer organizations as service agents, and de-risking funds to favour farmers, emphasizing the need for an aggregated ecosystem approach, value chain methodologies, partnerships, and accountability. Mr Michael Keller stressed the importance of appropriately sizing projects and transitioning from emergency responses to sustainable practices across environmental, economic, and social dimensions. Ms Becca Jablonski noted the private sector's adaptability to consumer demands, including a push for transparency and the opportunity to assess the impact of increased funding for resilience, citing the Colorado Food Summit's successful integration of young farmers and leaders as a model for intentional inclusion and long-term impact.

Key messages and policy recommendations:

1. Prioritize access to financial supports and insurance tool for smallholder and family farmers, including enhancing access to climate finance, incorporating loss and damage perspectives and gender sensitive approaches.
2. Ensure the active participation of farmers in decision-making structures.
3. Foster collaboration between the private sector and farmers to promote sustainable production, within the assistance of government led coordination and incentives.
4. Develop regional governance structures to tailor solutions to local contexts and increased dialogue between farmers and urban stakeholders.
5. Increase funding support for local led solutions for sustainable agriculture, including diversifying crops, combating land degradation, desertification, improving resilience to climate change as well as demand side measures such as promoting consumer awareness and behaviour change, e.g. towards plant-rich diets.

Session 5. Target 2.5 - Maintain Genetic Diversity

The session on Target 2.5, moderated by Mr Kent Nnadozie, Secretary for the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture at FAO, delved into the critical importance of maintaining genetic diversity within agricultural systems. The conversation highlighted the alarming loss of biodiversity and the essential role of genetic diversity in ensuring ecosystem resilience, highlighting stark statistics: an 80% erosion in genetic diversity, a reduction from 1000 to just 6 varieties of commercially grown apples. The reliance on a narrow range of crops was

identified as a significant risk, with calls for policies and practices that support seed diversity and sustainable, resilient agrifood systems.

This session aimed to assess global progress towards SDG 2.5, which targets maintaining the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants, and farmed animals. The session sought to identify significant blockages hindering progress and explore innovative solutions to overcome them. Throughout the discussions, there was a particular emphasis on the importance of inclusive policies, preserve and restore genetic diversity, respect and value indigenous and cultural diversity and support traditional conservation systems, and supporting rural communities, small-scale farmers in adapting to climate change. These insights collectively underscored the imperative of preserving genetic diversity for agricultural sustainability and resilience in the face of evolving challenges.

Ms Patricia Goulart Bustamante from Embrapa emphasized the significance of to give visibility and carry out studies on traditional biodiversity conservation strategies rather than the genetic material it yields. She highlighted the necessity of intersectoral actions to achieve food and nutrition security, including access to land, natural resources, water, and essential services like health, education, and transportation. Ms Bustamante stressed the importance of combating obesity, strengthening family farming, protecting agro-extractivist systems, and implementing specific measures for indigenous peoples, black populations, and traditional communities. Ms Bustamante pointed out the crucial role of family farming and traditional communities in conserving biodiversity. Ms Bustamante mentioned Brazil's rich biodiversity and social diversity, including 230 indigenous tribes, and the challenges in knowledge sharing due to the 2013 Biodiversity Law. Since 2015, Brazil's Ministries of Agriculture and Culture have collaborated on policies for dynamic conservation, focusing on both environmental and cultural preservation. The establishment of the Food and Nutrition Security Council in 2023 in Brazil, which prioritizes food sovereignty and supports family farming and agroecological systems, was highlighted as a pivotal development.

Ms Justine Lynn Limocon from the Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA) advocated for the implementation of policies and programmes that ensure the maintenance of genetic diversity, revitalization of traditional seeds and production methods, and recognition of indigenous knowledge. Ms Limocon stressed the importance of addressing land policies to conserve genetic diversity and ensuring farmers' access to high-quality seeds. With 13 million farmers in their membership, Ms Limocon highlighted the severe impacts of climate

change on farmers, who are adapting their systems and collaborating with institutions to protect and enhance their practices. Key strategies include farm diversification, innovation, support for family farmers, and promoting agroecology. In the Philippines, initiatives like introducing new crab species, revitalizing existing ones, and establishing seed banks have been undertaken. Ms Limocon emphasized the necessity of enhancing collaboration with small-scale farmers in co-creating innovations to protect cultural heritage, advocating for effective land-use policies, capacity building for small-scale farmers, and ensuring access to diverse, high-quality seeds to empower farmer decision-making.

Ms Sophie Aylmer representing the NGO Major Group highlighted in her intervention that the livestock sector's reliance on homogenous animal populations poses challenges in adaptation to climate change. In contrast, local breeds have shown better adaptability to environmental changes and are more energy-efficient in terms of reduced needs for cooling. Moreover, in the European Union, local breeds benefit from EU labelling, enabling farmers to market and price these animals more favourably.

Interventions from the floor brought attention to further critical issues in agricultural sustainability and resilience. The role of genetic resources, particularly those with drought tolerance, was emphasized as essential for crop diversification, reducing shocks, and building resilience. Such diversification also links ecosystem services to nutrition, underlining the importance of maintaining genetic variation among crops and livestock. It was pointed out that access to seeds is crucial and maintaining genetic variation is a shared responsibility. Additionally, there was a call to ensure that farmers who choose to detach from traditional seed systems are not marginalized, suggesting a need for inclusive policies that respect and support diverse farming practices.

Key messages and policy recommendations:

1. Ensure equitable access to high-quality seeds, including through promoting agroecology, capacity building among small-scale farmers, effective land-use policies, farm diversification and the uptake of innovations.
2. Support inclusive policies, recognizing Indigenous Peoples knowledge and traditional seeds and diverse production methods.
3. Prioritize drought-tolerant genetic resources within crop diversification and local generic animal breeds as a means of building climate resilience.

Session 6. Target 2.a; 2.b; 2.c – Investment, Trade, Markets

During the session moderated by Mr Boubaker Ben Belhassen, Director of the Markets and Trade Division at FAO, the importance of achieving SDG targets across both upstream and downstream value streams was emphasized, highlighting the role of markets and trade as pivotal mechanism. It was noted that developing countries and emerging economies are increasingly contributing to global agrifood trades, accounting for 40% of the activity. However, extreme events like climate changes, COVID-19, and shifts in trade have led to heightened volatility in agrifood markets. Despite a decline in world food prices in 2023, prices remain above the average of the previous decade, with domestic food prices continuing to surge, evidenced by a 24% increase over the last 12 months, contrasting with the decline in commodity trade prices. The session underscored the urgent need for accelerated and innovative efforts, as the world moves further away from Goal 2, necessitating substantial investments estimated between \$33-50 billion per year in agrifood systems, with a significant portion expected from donors. Interventions were advocated across the entire supply chain, including training programmes and infrastructure enhancements, to address the challenges of increasingly globalized agrifood systems and the volatility caused by various factors, aiming to improve the efficiency and sustainability of agrifood systems towards achieving SDG 2.

This session was dedicated to assessing global progress towards achieving SDG 2 and specifically 2.A, 2.B, and 2.C, focusing on increasing investment in rural infrastructure, agricultural research, technology development, and ensuring the proper functioning of food commodity markets. Insights from the session emphasized the importance of transitioning towards sustainable food production practices, promoting fair trade, empowering smallholder farmers, and addressing systemic economic disparities. Speakers underscored the need for innovative solutions to challenges such as price volatility, trade concentration, and the unsustainable nature of agricultural subsidies. The discussions emphasized the imperative of inclusive policies, sustainable investment strategies, and transformative approaches to achieve food security, nutrition, and agricultural sustainability.

Mr Shenggen Fan from China Agricultural University identified two significant challenges in the agricultural sector: the impact of high food prices and price volatility on consumers and producers, and the unsustainable nature of large agricultural subsidies that do not promote healthy food production and disadvantage farmers. Mr Fan proposed solutions to these issues,

including the establishment of food reserves, as seen with rice, which has helped stabilize prices. At the national level, he suggests a reform of subsidies to redirect funds towards producing nutritious food and supporting smallholder farmers. Mr Fan cited China as an example, where more resources are allocated directly to smallholders and climate change initiatives, resulting in more stable food prices that benefit both farmers and consumers. This approach aims to reduce market distortions and increase income, highlighting the importance of transitioning towards sustainable food production practices that prioritize health, food security, and nutrition.

Ms Akiko Suwa-Eisenmann from INRAE/HLPE-FSN discussed the importance of trade and markets, emphasizing the need for a stronger World Trade Organization (WTO) at the international level, and improved governance at the country level on the social and environmental dimensions of trade. She underscores the critical role of trade in food security, as either procuring food directly or procuring income, thus the means of buying it.. Ms Suwa-Eisenmann pointed out that international trade will become increasingly vital due to global warming and population growth that will lead to regions in excess supply of food and others in excess demand. However, Ms Suwa-Eisenmann noted that trade concentration favours large firms and a few countries, leading to dependence and vulnerability, and that trade often involves ultra-processed foods which are dangerous for health; moreover, beyond products, trade involves the exchange of natural resources (soil and water) embedded in those products. Cross-border trade, often informal and led by women, has its own challenges: lack of infrastructure, multiple checkpoints, taxes and regulations. To address these, she proposed solutions such as implementing stronger domestic policies on competition, nutrition and environmental protection relating to traded products, and facilitating regional trade through truly functioning regional trade agreements and improvements in hard and soft infrastructure. Ms Suwa-Eisenmann stressed the need to integrate all six dimensions of food security and nutrition, with a focus on empowering local communities to actively design trade and investment measures.

Mr Abdul Husaini from the Niger State Ministry of Lands and Survey addressed the challenges faced by farmers in Niger during COVID-19, where restrictions on movement severely impacted commodity trade, leaving farmers isolated. Mr Husaini emphasized the necessity of empowering farmers and the agricultural system, critiquing the growing trend of corporations pre-paying for crops, which effectively makes farmers work for future corporate gains. Mr Husaini argued that achieving SDG 2 requires investment strategies that protect vulnerable populations, suggesting the aggregation and integration of farmers as essential steps to enhance their output and capacity. Mr Husaini highlighted that sustainable development cannot be attained without

focusing on education and local solutions, pointing out the need to examine production processes for better international trade outcomes. Mr Husaini called for improved engagement at sub-regional levels to protect vulnerable farmers, advocating for stronger links to farmer communities, leadership at sub-national levels, and the empowerment of local communities. Mr Husaini noted a significant gap in the aggregation of support, stressing the importance of local-level interventions, educational initiatives on sustainable development, and integration across local, regional, and national levels to benefit farmers and address trade challenges.

Mr Fadhel Kaboub from the Global Institute for Sustainable Prosperity criticized the current global financial architecture as fundamentally incapable of achieving the SDGs due to its colonial roots. He highlighted the structural economic disparity, where \$2 trillion net moves from the Global South to the North, maintaining the South in roles of providing cheap raw materials, consuming by-products from the North, and adopting obsolete manufacturing processes. Mr Kaboub emphasized the Global South's need for fiscal policy space, currently hindered by external debts and structural deficits in food exports, energy (with a reliance on imported fuel), and manufacturing. Mr Kaboub proposed transformative solutions, including strategic investments focused on achieving food sovereignty—prioritizing local food production over security—investing in renewable energy to mitigate energy deficits, and moving away from the bottom of the manufacturing value chain. Mr Kaboub advocated for a systemic transformation to decolonize the global financial architecture, emphasizing investments in agroecology and native seeds, and strategic renewable energy projects as crucial steps towards decolonizing and reforming agrifood systems towards sustainability.

Key messages and policy recommendations:

1. Reform agricultural subsidies to prioritize nutritious food production and support smallholder farmers, e.g. moving to the establishment of food reserves to stabilize prices.
2. Integrate food security and nutrition dimensions into trade policies, focusing on empowering smallholder farmers and local communities, facilitating trade, implementing regional agreements and improving hard and soft infrastructure.
3. Improve farmers integration within local, regional and international markets, through training programmes and prioritizing local solutions to address trade challenges and protect vulnerable populations effectively.
4. Reform the global financial architecture by prioritizing strategic investments in local production, agroecology, native seeds and renewable energy projects.

Session 7. Tackling Underlying Causes and Drivers of Stagnated or Reversed Progress Towards SDG 2 in a World with Recurring Crisis

Moderated by Ms Rebecca Richards, Head of the Global Network Against Food Crises at WFP, the session focused on identifying persistent challenges and barriers to achieving food security, emphasizing the vulnerabilities of agrifood systems highlighted by recent compounding events. She pointed out that of the 258 million people experiencing food insecurity, 42% are affected by conflict and 32% by extreme climate change, illustrating the complex interplay of factors undermining food security. Ms Richards underscored the necessity for a policy paradigm shift, critiquing the short-term focus often prevalent in strategies designed for humanitarian crises. The discussion highlighted the urgent need for comprehensive, long-term planning and intervention to address the root causes of food insecurity and build resilient agrifood systems capable of withstanding both conflict and climate-related challenges.

This session focused on addressing persistent challenges to global food security and nutrition, including conflicts, climate change, and economic inequalities. It aimed to identify scalable pathways for building resilient and sustainable agrifood systems while managing risks effectively. It explored actions to mitigate crises' impact, policy shifts needed to protect development gains, and strategies for securing adequate funding. Speakers emphasized strengthening local agrifood systems, integrating humanitarian aid with agrifood transformation, and embedding disaster risk reduction into system frameworks. They highlighted the importance of systemic approaches, legislative frameworks for food rights, and investments in restoring natural and human capital for improved resilience. Additionally, the session stressed the need to transition from reactive responses to long-term trend analysis for effective crisis management and future planning.

Ms Justine Lynn Limocon from the Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA) emphasized the critical role of strengthening local agrifood systems and markets, highlighting the pivotal contribution of small-scale family farmers during the COVID-19 pandemic. These farmers not only acted as solution providers but also played a key role in ensuring resilience and the transition towards sustainable agrifood systems. Ms Limocon underscored the importance of agriculture cooperatives and farmers' organizations in collaborating with multi-sectoral organizations for a more integrated approach to agriculture and

climate financing. Ms Limocon advocated for legal frameworks that provide an enabling environment for farmers to access land and inputs, along with the necessity of building the capacity of rural youth. Ms Limocon stressed the integration of agroecological practices and more resilient agricultural practices through a holistic approach, emphasizing the need for sustainable financial mechanisms and direct funding to farm-level programmes. Highlighting the urgency of empowering farmers within value chain systems, Ms Limocon called for multi-sectoral collaboration and effective funding strategies to ensure farmers have control over their resources, advocating for a unified and bold response to global agrifood system challenges.

Ms Inaya Ezzeddine, a member of the Lebanese Parliament, emphasized the need for a paradigm shift in how agrifood systems are approached, advocating for a stronger nexus between academic research, grassroots movements, and policymaking. Ms Ezzeddine highlighted the interconnectedness of humanitarian aid, agrifood systems, peacebuilding, development, and climate change, stressing the importance of a systemic approach with multiple entry points. Ms Ezzeddine called for the establishment of legislative frameworks to embed the principles of agrifood system transformation and the right to food into law, ensuring accountability and responsibility. Ms Ezzeddine pointed out the weaponization of food in conflict areas like Palestine, underscoring the inadequacy of focusing solely on food insecurity drivers. Ms Ezzeddine noted the pivotal role of UN agencies in addressing the deeper geopolitical and economic causes of food insecurity and the necessity for humanitarian systems to operate within an agrifood systems transformation framework. Ms Ezzeddine argued for substantial changes in finance, budgeting, food environments, taxation, and fiscal policies to navigate the complexities of conflict and called for governance reforms centered on human rights to secure sustainable agrifood systems at both national and international levels.

Mr Jean-François Soussana, a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the UN Food System Coordination Hub, underscored the critical need to integrate the Sendai Protocol for Disaster Risk Reduction into the framework of agrifood systems to enhance resilience against climate change. Mr Soussana advocated for a comprehensive understanding of disaster risks, suggesting the use of downscaled climate scenarios to assess potential crop and livestock production failures and their subsequent impacts on food security. Mr Soussana emphasized strengthening disaster risk governance through combined preparedness and real-time implementation strategies, investing in disaster risk reduction to bolster resilience, and enhancing disaster preparedness to enable effective response and recovery processes that "Build Back Better."

Mr Soussana highlighted the increasing frequency and severity of food security and nutrition challenges triggered by climate change, stressing the importance of understanding these risks in the context of achieving the SDGs. Mr Soussana advocated for agroecological transitions, including crop and diet diversification, and the implementation of agriculture contingency plans at local levels to promote drought-tolerant crops and soil moisture conservation. Moreover, Mr Soussana called for investments in restoring natural capital—such as soils, watersheds, and agrobiodiversity—and human capital to improve social resilience. Preparedness plans, according to him, should ensure the availability and access to healthy food for vulnerable populations, highlighting the necessity of a paradigm shift towards more resilient, sustainable, and equitable agrifood systems in the face of climate change.

Mr Paul Howe from the Feinstein International Center highlighted the concerning upward trend in humanitarian food requirements and the increasing risk of famine, stressing the need for a shift from focusing primarily on immediate, reactive responses to also engaging with long-term trends. Mr Howe pointed out the tendency to emphasize negative developments, advocating for analysis of the interaction of both positive and negative trends to forecast future trajectories more effectively. While global trends provide valuable insights, Mr Howe underscored the necessity of analysing their manifestations at local levels to understand how different scenarios might affect various communities. By adopting these analytical shifts, he believes we can improve our handling of future crises. Mr Howe also stressed the importance of creating spaces for all stakeholders to come together, ensuring discussions encompass not only current issues but also the legacy left for future generations. This approach aims to foster a comprehensive understanding and proactive management of food security challenges.

Key messages and policy recommendations:

1. Strengthen local agrifood systems by empowering small-scale and family farmers within value chains, through training, effective farm level funding strategies and promoting agricultural cooperatives and farmers organizations.
2. Strengthen governance and right to food frameworks at international as well as national levels.
3. Develop a clear understanding of the root causes of food insecurity and hunger in conflict-affected and fragile contexts, as this relates to governance and equity and should be, where possible considered and factored into response planning.
4. Integrate the principles of agrifood systems transformation within international humanitarian aid. There is a need to transition from reactive responses to long-term trend

analysis for proactive and community-specific crisis management and future planning of food requirements, including support for markets, trade and value chains.

5. Shift from an exclusive short-term focus on humanitarian action to a more inclusive approach that engages with the long-term trends that lead to recurring crises and create spaces for all stakeholders to come together to address the implications for analysis and action.
6. Embed disaster risk reduction into systems frameworks, including through the integration of the Sendai Protocol into agrifood systems to enhance climate resilience and investing in preparedness and local agriculture contingency planning.
7. Promote agroecological transitions, including crop and diet diversification to support drought-tolerant crops, soil moisture conservation and investment in restoring natural and human capital.

Session 8. People (SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 10)

Moderated by Ms Lauren Phillips, Deputy Director of the FAO Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division, the session illuminated the inequalities in food security exacerbated by increasingly frequent and protracted crises, including the pandemic, economic instability, conflict, and climate-related shocks. These crises have significantly hindered progress on SDG 2, adversely affecting food security and socio-economic indicators, and amplified inequalities among different demographics, notably between rural and urban populations, the affluent and the impoverished, as well as among genders and various identities, including Indigenous Peoples. The session highlighted the distinct impact of these crises on women, who are more likely to experience food insecurity than men, face a productivity gap of 24% on same sized farms and encounter a significant wage gap in agricultural labour compared to men. The inadequacy of quantifying and documenting the crisis impact on specific groups was noted. Additionally, it was emphasized that climate change impacts are disproportionately affecting various communities, with poorer households losing more of their income than non-poor households due to climate shocks such as extreme heat or flooding. The session underscored the urgency of addressing these multifaceted crises, which serve as a catalyst for discussing inequalities that particularly afflict vulnerable groups, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to mitigate these disparities and advance towards achieving SDGs 1, 5, and 10 alongside SDG 2.

The session focused on the crucial role of sustainable agrifood systems in addressing poverty, health, education, and gender equality, while tackling inequalities. Examples highlighted the

need for a human rights-based approach, addressing intersectional inequality, supporting Indigenous Peoples, and implementing policy interventions. The discussion stressed the importance of sustained efforts, data aggregation, and addressing systemic root causes of food insecurity and inequality.

Ms Charlotte Dreger emphasized leveraging the interconnections between SDG 2 and other SDGs to enhance the impact of sustainable development interventions. She advocated for a human rights-based approach to foster meaningful participation in all levels of public policymaking, emphasizing the importance of clear participation rules, distinguishing the responsibilities of different actors, and addressing power imbalances. Ms Dreger highlighted CONSEA in Brazil and the Committee on World Food Security as positive examples of this approach at the national and global levels. Ms Dreger identified the over-reliance on global value chains, fossil-fuel based inputs, indebtedness of food import depending countries, gender-based violence, criminalization and repression of human rights defenders, and lack of robust social security systems and decent working conditions as challenges that could be addressed through agroecological food production, limiting corporate power, revising investment and trade rules as well as the global financial architecture. Stressing the role of political will, Ms Dreger called for strengthening the position of small-scale farmers, short supply chains, territorial markets, and phasing out chemical pesticides and fertilizers. Ms Dreger also suggested reducing the debt burden to allow investments in social protection, ensuring meaningful social participation in policymaking, and addressing power imbalances and structural issues in finance and trade. Ms Dreger advocated for supporting local agroecological production, limiting corporate power, and developing trade agreements based on food sovereignty to reverse corporate control in the trade market and enhance public services.

Ms Akiko Suwa-Eisenmann addressed the complexities of growing inequalities within agrifood systems and their distinction from poverty, highlighting that even in high-income countries with low overall food insecurity, vulnerable groups still face malnutrition. Ms Suwa-Eisenmann emphasized that inequality has long-run impact, and is intersectional, affected by a myriad of factors that interact and cumulate, including geography, gender, age, disability, religion, ethnicity, caste, and migration status, thus requiring deeper understanding of the root causes of inequalities. Ms Suwa-Eisenmann pointed out that the drivers of inequality come not only from within the food systems such as access to finance and information but are also systemic, due to concentration of power and lack of agency, which are often entrenched by historical and cultural norms. Ms Suwa-Eisenmann argued that while redistribution and a social safety net are

necessary and efficient, they are insufficient unless the underlying drivers of inequality are addressed. To combat these disparities, Ms Suwa- Eisenmann, based on the recent HLPE-FSN report on inequalities in food security and nutrition, advocated for transformative actions that tackle structural challenges, promote access to natural resources, and integrate nutrition into a universal healthcare, emphasizing that overcoming inequalities requires more than resources—it requires political will. Finally, Ms Suwa-Eisenmann stressed that the Right to Food is not just a slogan; it needs to be turned into action.

Ms Rochelle Diver highlighted the significant challenges and inequalities faced by Indigenous Peoples, particularly regarding their food systems. Indigenous communities in North America, often front-line defenders of their lands, have historically been displaced to undesirable lands during colonial periods, leading to current living conditions in food deserts. The introduction of food aid lacking in cultural and social appropriateness has shifted their diets away from traditional foods towards unhealthy, processed diets prevalent in North America. Ms Diver spoke of initiatives to decolonize Indigenous diets by promoting healthier, traditional dietary practices through local processing centers for wild rice and hunting and fishing activities. Ms Diver emphasized the importance of supporting Indigenous Peoples and sharing traditional practices as ecosystem solutions, as recognized in discussions at the UNCCC. The detrimental impact of agrochemicals and pesticides on Indigenous food systems and health was underlined. Ms Diver stressed the persistent inequalities faced by Indigenous communities, regardless of their geographic location, calling for support for land rights and the protection of biodiversity.

Mr Simon Barquera discussed policies and investments that intersect the objectives of SDG 2 with other SDGs to mitigate inequalities, focusing on a programme in Mexico targeted at women. This conditional cash transfer programme required women to attend health clinics and participate in healthy child educational programmes, with the cash transfer amount based on the number of children and including a macronutrient supplement. Evaluated over ten years, the programme showed positive results but was later replaced with a non-conditional cash transfer programme amid criticism of its top-down approach. Additionally, Mr Barquera addressed the challenges of malnutrition, obesity, and over-nutrition, exacerbated by ultra-processed foods and powerful private sector influences. Mr Barquera highlighted the implementation of a 10% soda tax in 2013, which was followed by 40 countries adopting similar measures within two years, and the introduction of front-of-package labelling warnings for high-fat and sugar content. Further policies included a food law supporting exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, accountability measures for school food, a ban on GMOs, and new food guidelines promoting

healthy and affordable options, developed with community participation to ensure they were adapted to regional needs and sensitive to the population's context.

Intervening from the floor, Ms Lara Nasreddine discussed the nutrition transition in Lebanon, highlighting the shift in dietary patterns and its impact on public health. Ms Becca Jablonski inquired about examples of federal government support, specifically policies aiding Indigenous communities in achieving SDG 2, with the response pointing towards NGOs and foundations playing a significant role in promoting agroecology and food sovereignty. A common theme emerged on the need for programme continuity that transcends political cycles, suggesting that initiatives must be sustainable beyond the tenure of any given political administration. There was a consensus that mere redistribution efforts are insufficient as they do not tackle the systemic root causes of food insecurity and inequality. The importance of aggregating data was also underscored, emphasizing the need for comprehensive and detailed information to guide effective policymaking and intervention strategies.

Key messages and policy recommendations:

1. Address underlying and intersectional inequalities within populations, through healthcare programmes, promoting access to natural resources, development of social protection programmes, widening land rights and reviewing trade and investment policies to ensure fulfilment of the right to food.
2. Address gender inequalities in access to assets, resources, services and knowledge needed to fully participate in agrifood systems, as well as focus on approaches which improve women's agency and empowerment.
3. Strengthen governance, fostering meaningful participation across all levels of policy making, establishing clear guidelines for inclusive stakeholder engagement.
4. Enable evidence-based policy making and effective intervention strategies through the collection of comprehensive, reliable and disaggregated data.
5. Enable long-term policy continuity beyond political cycles based on legal frameworks and rights-based approaches, including trade agreements, food taxation policies, nutritional labelling, school meal programmes, child education programmes and nutritional guidelines development with community participation, integrating traditional dietary practices and adapted to local needs.

Session 9. Planet (SDGs 6, 13, 14, 15)

Moderated by Mr Kaveh Zahedi, Director of the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment at FAO, this session emphasized the critical interconnections between SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and other SDGs, highlighting the essential role of addressing both synergies and trade-offs in shaping the future of food production. The session concentrated on successful strategies to manage these synergies and overcome challenges. He stressed that solving the complexities of SDG interlinkages demands political will at both global and national levels, with science playing a crucial role in identifying solutions that provide multiple benefits for SDG 2 climate action, resilience and biodiversity conservation, like land restoration and sustainable agrifood practices that conserve and sustainably use biodiversity within agrifood systems. He underscored that finance is currently inadequate for the scale of transformation needed. There is an urgent need for increased financing for transformative actions grounded on science and benefitting small holders and local communities. The session aimed to explore how leveraging the connections between SDG 2 and other SDGs can promote sustainable development, with a particular focus on SDGs 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 14 (Life Below Water), 15 (Life on Land), and 13 (Climate Action), demonstrating the significant impact of addressing food security on advancing planetary SDGs.

The session focused on exploring sustainable agrifood practices and policies that not only address hunger but also promote resilience to climate change and mitigate environmental impacts. Speakers emphasized the urgency of the challenges, including land degradation, disasters, and the looming threat of climate change on agrifood systems. They called for transformative actions like nature-based solutions, regional cooperation, and agroecological practices, emphasizing biodiversity conservation and integrating traditional knowledge. Insights from discussions highlighted the need to enhance technical capacities, scale adaptation strategies globally, and engage the private sector in sustainability efforts. Overall, the session underscored the complexity of achieving food security and sustainability while navigating the dynamic interplay between human activities and planetary health.

Mr Jean-François Soussana advocated for utilizing agrifood systems as pivotal entry point for the transformation and achievement of the SDGs, highlighting the pressing issue of 2 billion people living with water scarcity and the transgression of six out of nine planetary boundaries, including climate change and biodiversity loss. Mr Soussana outlined a transformative approach that

incorporates response options to climate change with benefits for food security and conservation, including large-scale bio-nutrient production and multidimensional equity. Mr Soussana emphasized three main categories of solutions: nature-based solutions like reforestation and biodiversity preservation; food-driven responses aimed at disaster risk reduction, strengthening food environments, reducing animal protein in diets, and minimizing food waste. Mr Soussana stressed the importance of a holistic approach, underpinned by evidence and requiring coordination across ministries and stakeholders, to effectively combine these strategies for sustainable agrifood system transformation.

Ms Elizabeth Mwendwa Mwendwa highlighted that countries are striving to enhance food production in response to the growing population, but conventional agricultural practices are heavily reliant on water use and contribute to pollution. Ms Mwendwa cited the regional cooperation within the SADC region (Southern African countries) as an example of good practice, particularly in reducing transboundary water use in agriculture. Ms Mwendwa proposed several solutions to address these challenges: 1) Implementing policies that promote research and technologies for sustainable agricultural production; 2) Coordinating between government ministries and departments to establish guidelines and frameworks, which include capacity building for young researchers at the local level and strengthening multi-stakeholder action to improve agriculture water management; 3) Consolidating data to share best practices and analyse problems and solutions; and 4) Intensifying technical assistance to farmers. Ms Mwendwa acknowledged that we are not currently on track to achieve SDG 2 but emphasized that acting on these points could significantly improve our chances of success.

Ms Magdalena Ackermann emphasized the reality of a multilayer crisis characterized by increasing hunger, malnutrition, and water scarcity, exacerbated by conflicts, wars, and occupations, with specific mention of the Gaza Strip's population suffering from food insecurity. Ms Ackermann stressed the importance of fulfilling the right to food and life, pointing out the critical interlinkages between the SDGs and the necessity of understanding their pathways. Ms Ackermann advocated for agroecology as a proven solution for communities and food producers, highlighting its effectiveness within a framework of food sovereignty and human rights, addressing social injustice, climate change, and biodiversity loss. Ms Ackermann noted that while agroecology has the potential to transform agrifood systems, it lacks the political support required for its broader adoption. Governance based on a human rights framework is essential, with the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) serving as a crucial platform for political support at global and national levels, facilitating policies that consider structural causes and

provide access to land and natural resources for small producers. Ms Ackermann also addressed the need to scrutinize proposed solutions to prevent power and land concentration, emphasizing the importance of questioning the origin of these proposals to avoid perpetuating power imbalances.

Mr Jean-Luc Chotte highlighted the urgent issue of land degradation, predicting the loss of 1 billion hectares by 2030 if current trends continue. Mr Chotte emphasized the need for Agrifood System Transformation to break silos and adopt integrative land management practices to achieve land degradation neutrality, reduce threats to biodiversity, and acknowledge the interdependency between climate action and agrifood systems. Mr Chotte advocated for breaking silos through common mapping for sustainable land management and restoration, a unified system for monitoring National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and incorporating national action plans for land restoration into FST pathways. Mr Chotte also pointed out how the consumption of imported products contributes to land degradation in other countries, underscoring the need for systemic changes in how we manage and interact with land to ensure sustainability.

Ms Cecilia Elizondo addressed the impacts of disasters and climate changes on agrifood systems, noting that 30% of gas emissions are produced by the current agrifood systems model. Ms Elizondo highlighted the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region's vulnerability, being the second most affected area by disasters, which significantly impacts agricultural sectors, people's livelihoods, and food security. Ms Elizondo referenced the commitments made at COP28, particularly the Emirates Declaration on Food Security, which emphasizes reducing gas emissions through agroecological practices. Ms Elizondo discussed Mexico's successful implementation of the law for healthy and sustainable food, achieved after 11 years of work, which includes the use of bio inputs and the adoption of agroecological principles to avoid chemicals and pesticides. Mexico's commitment of 2 billion dollars annually for five years towards transitioning from intensive production to agroecology demonstrates a practical application of these principles and highlights the necessity for structural transformations in governance mechanisms to support sustainable agrifood systems.

The need for enhanced technical capacities within countries was agreed by experts in consensus from the floor. Ms Chiara Villani stressed the significance of integrating biodiversity and agrobiodiversity into climate and land degradation policies, with CGIAR's efforts ensuring these aspects are prioritized. Ms Maryam Rezaei introduced the concept of scaling local adaptation

strategies to global levels, focusing on the dynamic shifts in food markets due to climate shocks and the mobility of populations. She also pointed out the crucial role of agribusiness and SMEs in climate finance and capacity building. Mr Brian Baldwin discussed the trade-offs between increasing food production and reducing gas emissions, examining the impact of animal treatment on emissions and the challenge of engaging the private sector in sustainability efforts without a narrow focus on carbon metrics. The collective insights underscored the importance of a holistic approach to food security, sustainability, and resilience, considering both traditional knowledge and innovative solutions.

Key messages and policy recommendations:

1. Embrace nature-based solutions by prioritizing initiatives that increase reforestation and preserve biodiversity, including agroecology, integrated land and water management policies.
2. Embed disaster risk reduction early warning and anticipatory actions, guided by Sendai Protocol.
3. Strengthen regional cooperation for evidence-based ecological planning, through government coordination for the establishment of guidelines and consolidation of data on best practices.
4. Invest in youth and local capacity development, to build technical knowledge among farmers and scale-up local and regional hubs.

Session 10. Prosperity (SDGs 7, 8, 9, 11, 12)

Mr Dejene Tezera, Director at the Department of Agri-Business, UNIDO, moderated the Session 10 and highlighted the pressing challenges of sustainable food production and consumption, acknowledging that current efforts are falling short. Mr Tezera emphasizes the necessity of a structural transformation towards sustainability in the food sector. This transformation is critical to address the complexities of modern agriculture and ensure global food security.

The session aimed to integrate responses for transforming agrifood systems and advancing sustainable urban development, energy transition, economic growth, and decent work. It underscored the need for multi-level, multi-sector governance approaches and proactive engagement with diverse stakeholders to achieve sustainable agrifood systems and economic prosperity. Speakers emphasized leveraging the interlinkages to create synergies and foster holistic approaches to sustainable development. Discussions highlighted the critical issue of the

clean energy transition, food loss and waste, the urban-rural link in food security, and efforts to enhance decent work conditions in agriculture and food sectors.

Mr Brian Kawuma, Power For All, emphasized the opportunities for agrifood systems to contribute to the clean energy transition. Current agricultural practices are fossil fuel dependant and contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. Deforestation and energy-intensive methods exacerbate this issue, which is disproportionately affecting underdeveloped regions with limited adaptive resources, particularly in Africa. Mr Kawuma stressed however that there is the opportunity for the sector, from small-holder farmers to agrifood businesses to move from reliance on fossil fuel energy to take advantage of agriculture value chains through the use of bio energy products and renewable energy solutions. A starting point would involve supporting governments in the Global South to integrate clean energy initiatives into their agricultural sector development strategies. Additionally, the FAO's hand-in-hand platform should incorporate energy-related data for the agricultural sector, enabling national governments to grasp the significance of clean energy in fostering sustainable agriculture.

Ms Maryam Rezaei from ODI (the Overseas Development Institute) emphasizes the need to focus on food loss and waste (FWL) as a critical factor affecting food security, pointing out it as a manifestation of the inefficiency in the food system (FS). Ms Rezaei identifies various causes of FWL, including issues with the cold chain, energy inefficiencies, market systems, consumer actions, and cultural practices, urging for a connection between FWL data and hunger data to address the problem effectively. Ms Rezaei argues that the ineffectiveness in tackling FWL stems from a lack of holistic commitment, harmonized approach, accurate data, and sufficient knowledge and funds. Ms Rezaei advocates for a departure from business as usual, calling for holistic national plans and inter-sectoral approaches that include participatory processes to ensure solution ownership. This approach should consider the social, ecological, and food systems' diversity and reflect the interests and needs of different actors. Ms Rezaei stresses the importance of the public sector in providing an enabling environment, fiscal policies for waste valorization, driving innovation, considering trade-offs, establishing frameworks for cross-sector coordination, assessing and monitoring FWL, and enhancing capacity development to promote best practices.

Ms Jane Battersby from the University of Cape Town emphasizes the importance of understanding the urban-rural link and the integration and overlaps across the SDGs, particularly highlighting the journey from farm to fork and the necessity of measuring the intermediate steps.

Ms Battersby points out that food security in urban areas hinges not only on the availability of food but also on its accessibility to households, which is influenced by urban challenges like access to basic services, transport, and water. Battersby advocates for the readjustment of food policy and governance to include urban and peri-urban contexts and to involve civil society and the private sector in decision-making processes. Ms Battersby underscores the critical roles of small-scale producers and the informal sector in food systems, arguing for their recognition and more proactive engagement. Furthermore, Ms Battersby stresses the need for a multi-level, multi-sector governance approach that shifts from focusing solely on food production to adopting an agrifood systems perspective. Ms Battersby calls for recognizing the informal sector's value, proposing guidelines for food safety within it, and underlining the adage, "if food is not safe, it is not food," to enhance food systems' efficiency and inclusivity.

Mr Rajgopal Dashrath Chandra Shekar of the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) emphasized on the union's efforts in lobbying and advocacy for policies that enhance decent work conditions in agriculture and food sectors. These efforts aim at ensuring fair wages, safe working conditions, and job security, thereby contributing to economic growth, poverty reduction, and addressing hunger (SDG 2). INTUC's pivotal role extends to promoting sustainable agricultural practices and technological innovations that not only improve food production and efficiency but also reduce waste, enhance food distribution and storage, and bolster resilience to climate change. This involves collaboration with Agriculture Unions, Farm Producing Organizations, and Industries to spur investments in sustainable food production and distribution infrastructure. Moreover, INTUC is committed to engaging its members in capacity building, leadership development, training, and education programmes. These initiatives are particularly focused on empowering leadership among workers, including women and farm-producing communities, to adopt sustainable practices in food production, consumption, and waste management, highlighting the crucial role of organization in protecting farmers and smallholder farmers in rural areas.

Interventions from the floor started with Ms Belinda Ng from MGCY who highlighted the challenges women face in navigating urban food procurement, emphasizing the need to address gender-specific challenges. Mr Simon Barquera shared insights from interventions aimed at regulating informal street food in Mexico, revealing issues with ultra-processed and low-quality food. Mr Amos Laar calls for a strategy to connect the dots between informal food sectors, anticipating challenges and identifying solutions. Mr Shenggen Fan proposed recommendations to create win-win situations and maximize synergies, such as reducing food loss and waste

(FLW), promoting whole grain consumption, and reducing red meat intake, noting that overconsumption is prevalent by 20-30% and suggesting more concrete recommendations. Ms Aline Mosnier discussed the impact of perception and consumer choices on food systems. Ms Lauren Philips introduced the importance of considering women's perspectives in the context of pre-prepared meals, highlighting the need for inclusivity and consideration of different demographics in food policy and system reforms.

Key messages and policy recommendations:

1. Reduce fossil fuel dependency and find alternative, cleaner, renewable alternatives, including bioenergy, to increase sustainability of agrifood systems.
2. Invest in sustainable infrastructure to reduce post-harvest loss, including through adding value to agrifood products, waste valorization, among other interventions and anchor food loss and waste reduction strategies in broader national action plans addressing food security, investment and climate change.
3. Strengthen multisectoral and multilevel governance, for both the formal and informal sector of agrifood systems and with inclusion of urban and peri-urban contexts to connect farm to fork. Incorporating the informal sector provides recognition of their role and helps build capacity to apply food safety guidelines.
4. Support trade unions actions and policies which prioritize decent work in the agrifood sector, including fair wages, safe working conditions and job security.
5. Develop a national plan with an intersectoral approach that engages stakeholders through participatory processes.

Session 11. Peace (SDG 16)

Moderated by Mr Jesse Wood, Chief of Humanitarian Policy and Practice in WFP's Emergency Preparedness and Response Service, the session 11 investigated the multifaceted impacts of conflicts on food insecurity, emphasizing the necessity of addressing the root causes of food instability, including crisis from political and climate issues. He articulated the urgency of making food systems more resilient to shocks through careful examination of mechanisms and investments. Mr Wood advocates for tackling the drivers of conflicts to foster equitable societies with robust institutions that safeguard people's rights. The dialogue acknowledges the intertwined nature of conflict, climate, political, and economic crises in exacerbating food insecurity and undernutrition, particularly highlighting the dire situations in conflict zones like Sudan, Gaza, and Palestine. With projections of increasing food insecurity affecting 600 million people and the

alarming statistics of civilian deaths and internally displaced persons, Mr Wood called for a holistic approach to address global food crises and enhance societal resilience and recovery in conflict-impacted regions.

The session focused on exploring the interconnectedness between SDG 2 and peacebuilding efforts, aiming to identify synergies that amplify interventions and foster holistic approaches to sustainable development. Speakers emphasized the critical link between conflict, insecurity, and food insecurity, highlighting the detrimental impacts on food systems and the exacerbation of hunger and malnutrition in conflict-affected areas. Insights underscored addressing governance and institutional bottlenecks to promote collective action, mitigate crises, and achieve SDG 2 while contributing to peace and security. Discussions also stressed the importance of innovative governance arrangements, global governance reforms, and integrating food security into peace discussions, highlighting gender disparities as a significant challenge.

Mr Habib Ur Rehman Mayar highlighted the crucial link between conflict and hunger, stating that conflict is a primary driver of food insecurity, as seen in places like Gaza where food scarcity is used as a weapon of war. Mr Mayar argued for a holistic approach to sustainable food systems, emphasizing the need to end wars to stabilize food supplies and suggesting that investments in agriculture and a shift toward long-term humanitarian efforts are essential for building resilience. Mr Mayar pointed out the potential in countries like Somalia to not only achieve self-sufficiency but also become food exporters, advocating for social protection and infrastructure investment to support the food sector. Additionally, Mr Mayar emphasized the importance of climate-resilient investments in developing nations to adapt to climate change, urging a transition from reactive measures to practical, action-oriented partnerships and policies. Mr Mayar stressed that ending hunger requires a fundamental change in approach, integrating community participation to build resilience and ensure food security.

Ms Inaya Ezzeddine emphasized the importance of questioning who sets the rules in global food security, pointing out that control often rests with the powerful, which influences the distribution and access to resources. Ms Ezzeddine highlighted that conflicts and climate change exacerbate resource scarcity, underscoring the urgent need to prioritize peace and effective collaboration among UN agencies within a broader international framework to avoid inefficiencies and siloed efforts. Ms Ezzeddine argued for the integration of food as a fundamental human right into peace discussions, noting that ignoring the distinctions between affluent and impoverished nations hampers progress toward fair resource distribution. Ms Ezzeddine advocated for global

governance and structural reforms, including the enactment of laws to formalize agrifood systems that account for gender, youth, and disabilities, while ensuring funding and incorporating an anti-corruption perspective to transform agrifood systems effectively. Furthermore, Ms Ezzeddine pointed out the historical context of post-World War II and the continued high number of conflict-related deaths, indicating a widespread distrust in International Humanitarian Law (IHL) among those in conflict zones. Ms Ezzeddine stressed the need for legal frameworks that standardize terminology and scope, securing the right to nutritious and sustainable food for all, including vulnerable groups, through targeted budgeting, taxation schemes, and anti-corruption measures.

Mr Abdi Fidar emphasized the direct connection between conflicts and food insecurity, highlighting how conflicts, ranging from political and ethnic to territorial and civil wars, significantly jeopardize food security, especially for vulnerable communities. Mr Fidar pointed out that these conflicts disrupt agrifood systems and worsen socio-economic disparities. Mr Fidar stressed the importance of strong government institutions for maintaining stability, enforcing laws, and delivering essential services, noting that enhancing governance is key to effective response and resilience against food insecurity. Moreover, Mr Fidar advocated for empowering regional and local actors who have detailed knowledge of local issues and can offer targeted solutions to grievances, thereby playing a vital role in conflict resolution and fostering inclusive approaches. Additionally, Mr Fidar recommended the implementation of social safety net programmes, including cash transfers, food assistance, and livelihood support, to provide immediate relief and help vulnerable populations meet their basic needs during crises, underlining these measures as essential components of a comprehensive strategy to combat food insecurity in conflict-affected areas.

Mr Michael Windfuhr highlighted the importance of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) framework as a vital tool for addressing food security challenges and ensuring the effective delivery of food and humanitarian aid. Mr Windfuhr emphasized that the framework facilitates coordination among various stakeholders to tackle food insecurity efficiently. Mr Windfuhr noted the disproportionate impact of conflicts on women and girls, who face increased vulnerabilities and challenges in accessing food and resources, underscoring the need to address gender disparities in conflict resolution and humanitarian efforts to ensure equitable food security. Mr Windfuhr pointed out the necessity of identifying and resolving the root causes of conflicts for sustainable peace and food security, despite the complexities and challenges this entails, especially during conflict. Mr Windfuhr advocated for using food security as a means of

peacebuilding, arguing that ensuring access to food can alleviate tensions and foster trust among communities affected by conflict. Mr Windfuhr stressed the importance of preventative measures and early warning systems to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters and crises on food insecurity. Additionally, he called for adequate compensation for conflict victims and participatory policy design involving all stakeholders, including affected communities, to develop effective, inclusive food security policies and interventions, highlighting the role of food security in reducing conflict and promoting peace.

When the floor was opened for reflections, speakers offered insights from various perspectives. Ms Lara Nasreddine from Lebanon pointed out the widespread effects of conflicts on food insecurity, highlighting the shift towards unhealthy diets, such as increased consumption of energy-dense foods and carbohydrates, which can lead to health issues like diabetes. She emphasized the need for improving healthy diets through an agrifood systems lens. Mr Jean Luc Chotte discussed the importance of disaster risk reduction and anticipation as strategies to prevent conflict. Mr Fadhel Kaboub expressed concern over the dwindling trust in governments and the UN, criticizing the lack of support for addressing food insecurity and the failure to recognize the use of hunger as a weapon. Mr Kaboub also touched upon the impacts of colonization in Canada, where marginalized communities face restrictions on expressing their traditional ways, often under the guise of conservation. The discussion also covered the challenges of mapping and preventive actions in scenarios of overlapping land rights and the movements of nomadic populations, highlighting the complexity of addressing food insecurity in conflict and post-colonial contexts.

In the concluding remarks of the discussion, the lead discussants offered insights into the complexities of implementing laws and policies related to food security and land management amidst political and economic challenges. Ms Inaya Ezzeddine highlighted the difficulty of enacting laws at the national level, especially those requiring political and economic changes. Mr Michael Windfuhr discussed the effectiveness and challenges of international law in conflict situations, noting that while laws like the Convention against Torture are widely endorsed, their implementation often falls short. Mr Windfuhr emphasized the importance of laws for individuals affected by rights violations and noted the utility of disaster preparedness and climate adaptation policies at the local level for handling crises and climate change. The sensitive nature of land issues was mentioned, with policies and measures related to land management being particularly delicate, suggesting that tools like voluntary guidelines for legitimate land tenure and land administration could facilitate fair management. Mr Habib Ur Rehman Mayar addressed the

crises of food insecurity, hunger, and climate change, advocating for action on the Paris Agreement as the only solution. Mr Mayar called for a revolution in international conduct, emphasizing the need for collaboration and cooperation among multiple stakeholders, including the UN, to address these pressing issues effectively.

Key messages and policy recommendations:

1. Shift from short-term humanitarian assistance to longer-term investments in livelihoods and building resilience of agrifood systems with a focus on the right to food, disaster risk reduction and community-based approaches, integrating regional and local actors.
2. Develop comprehensive legislation to ensure the right to food and sustainable and equitable agrifood systems.
3. Invest in understanding institutions and governance dynamics around agrifood systems functioning as it is critical to ensure that collective actions at local, national and regional levels leads to the desired change and contributes to preserving peace and security.
4. Facilitate and agree upon the long-term vision and desired outcomes through systems thinking and a holistic perspective. National engagement, ownership and commitment are needed to raise awareness of the inter-relationship between agrifood systems, peace and security, develop a shared vision that takes into account different dimensions and work within structures to support convergent policies and coherent actions allowing effective prevention of conflict.
5. Enhance trust in global governance mechanisms and the UN system. Foster collaboration to prevent working in silos and ensure effectiveness. Promote and enhance implementation of existing international conventions and voluntary guidelines.
6. Invest in anticipatory action, early warning systems, climate adaptation policies, and social protection programmes.

Session 12. Investment and Finance

Ms Jyotsna Puri, Associate Vice-President, Strategy and Knowledge Department, IFAD, posed critical questions on incentivizing sustainable solutions for achieving SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), highlighting the need to understand the financial gaps and the role of blended finance platforms in bringing various actors together. Ms Puri raised the global challenge of creating a taxonomy for identifying eligible customers for such ambitious projects. Ms Puri pointed out the effort and time required to establish these platforms, suggesting a span of 2.5 years. The session aimed to explore the significance of targeted investment in addressing food security and how innovation

can be tailored to suit varying risk appetites and outcome measurements, prompting a discussion on the collaboration between private and public institutions to achieve these goals.

The session focused on the vital role of investment and finance in advancing SDG 2 and building sustainable agrifood systems. It explored questions around ensuring adequate financing for resilient systems, addressing funding gaps, and devising innovative strategies to cover shortfalls. Discussions underscored the importance of targeted investments, political will, and holistic approaches to align investments with desired outcomes, particularly in supporting smallholder farmers and promoting gender-inclusive finance. Challenges in agricultural investment and the urgent need for a comprehensive overhaul of climate finance were also discussed, emphasizing collaborative efforts and improved utilization of public funds to address global challenges in nutrition and climate change.

Mr Patrick Caron of Cirad and CGIAR highlighted the significant return on investment in research, with a USD1 investment yielding a USD10 return, highlighting the importance of investing in the transformation of food systems, including processing and risk anticipation. Mr Caron discussed the gap between the cost and price of foods, pointing out hidden costs and emphasizing that food systems transformation is a matter of partnership, often accompanied by substantial transaction costs. Mr Caron provided an overview of the financial landscape, noting that while an additional USD 33 billion is requested from funding institutions, public authorities spend USD 540 billion on agricultural production, against a backdrop of USD 4-9 trillion dollars in broader economic activities. Mr Caron argued that the request for investment is modest in comparison of available finances. Mr Caron also touched on the inefficiency of current agriculture support, with 87% of the USD 540 billion potentially causing harm to public goods and sustainability. Mr Caron concluded that relying solely on more public funding is unrealistic due to budget allocations to other sectors like health and defence, and that mobilizing private funding, whose primary *raison d'être* is not the production of public goods, presents a significant challenge.

Mr Arthur Muliro emphasized the critical need for targeted investments in the agrifood system, particularly highlighting the importance of addressing the multiple gaps faced by smallholder farmers in areas like nutrition, resilience, and adaptation. Mr Muliro pointed out the challenges in gender and women's finance, noting the difficulty women face in accessing grants due to lack of collateral. Mr Muliro advocated for a whole system thinking approach to effectively tackle policy questions, which could be more straightforward if there was sufficient political will. Mr Muliro urged a re-evaluation of the current focus of research and investment, noting a significant

mismatch between research objectives and the desired outcomes, particularly regarding the support for smallholder farmers and the broader transformation of agrifood systems. Mr Muliro also called for improved market access for smallholders and explored how domestic resources could be better utilized for investment, emphasizing the need for nutrition-specific investments and the inclusion of women in finance mechanisms. Ultimately, Mr Muliro stressed the necessity of a stronger political will and a comprehensive system rethink to achieve meaningful transformation in the agrifood system.

Mr Brian Baldwin observed a decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA) and an increase in humanitarian assistance, emphasizing the need to view these not as separate entities but as part of a cohesive strategy. Mr Baldwin suggested revising finance indicators and adapting the dashboard to better capture the nuances of agricultural investment and highlighted that National governments can employ incentives, such as tax policies, as a means to foster investment within the agricultural sector. Additionally, Mr Baldwin discussed the breakdown of private sector involvement, stating that long-term investments, such as pension funds in agroforestry, are typically made with the expectation of achieving a return on investment over a horizon exceeding 20 years. Mr Baldwin discussed the importance of considering risks in agricultural investments, the critical role of domestic private sectors, and the challenges of securing financing in agriculture compared to other sectors like tourism. Mr Baldwin called on national governments to establish regulatory frameworks that encourage investment in agriculture, emphasizing the need for international organizations to support these efforts and address the financial demands of climate change adaptation and mitigation in the agricultural sector.

Participants from the floor made several key interventions emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing global challenges in nutrition, climate change, and investment. They pointed out that nutrition-sensitive agriculture alone is insufficient for improving nutrition outcomes, as evidenced by rising rates of malnutrition and obesity. The issue of subsidies for unhealthy food ingredients like sugar and fructose, which contribute to the affordability of ultra-processed products, was raised as a concern requiring redirection of investments towards healthier food goods.

They also noted that market structures in the global south are designed and dictated by the global food system, which has assigned the global south with cash crops. Thus, foreign investment and assistance drives farmers to produce low-nutrient food that does not enhance their food security, such as watermelon in the place of wheat. Global investments and agricultural policy must be

driven by nutrition, food security and food sovereignty. The disparity between food security and food sovereignty must be considered to drive rural people and developing nations towards profit seeking incentives.

There was a strong call for a complete overhaul of climate finance, advocating for countries responsible for climate debt to fulfil their obligations and for a reimagining of climate finance that avoids entrapment, spanning sectors like energy and industry. The necessity of reevaluating the role of natural capital was mentioned, alongside suggestions for better utilization of public money through impact investments and capacity building, facilitated by UN institutions, to assess impact more effectively.

The discussions underscored the need for countries to acknowledge and pay their climate debts, extending beyond discussions at the Conference of the Parties (COPs) to include agriculture, energy, and industry. The role of the UN in facilitating this reset towards lifesaving, transformative investments was highlighted, as was the importance of collaboration between the private sector, public institutions, and the need for a better understanding of national public goods. Concerns were voiced about the significant loss in value due to unpriced externalities in the political economy, emphasizing labour rights and the critical re-evaluation of nutrition-sensitive approaches to agriculture.

Key messages and policy recommendations:

1. Streamline financing, including humanitarian assistance, domestic and international private sector, and implement strategic investments to address the multiple gaps in areas like nutrition, resilience and adaptation, adequately reach target groups, and align with agrifood sector sustainability targets.
2. Improve access to finance and market for small-holder and family framers. These policies must be gender inclusive, addressing gender disparities in access to finance and financial services.
3. Enhance collaboration between local and national government and private sector and align national and international policies to redirect investments towards improving access to healthy diets and sustainable agriculture.
4. Establish regulatory frameworks that encourage investment in agriculture, emphasizing the need for international organizations to support these efforts and address the financial demands of climate change adaptation and mitigation in the agricultural sector.

5. Redirect climate finance towards sustainable and resilient agrifood systems transformation as the sector that can improve the most in terms of reducing burden to nature and climate.

Session 13, Science and Technology

Ms Astra Bonini, Chief of the Integrated Policy Analysis Branch with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) in the Division for Sustainable Development Goals, moderated and opened the session by emphasizing the critical role of science and technology (STI) in accelerating progress towards achieving SDG 2, which aims at ending hunger and ensuring access to food for all. She highlighted the potential of STI to provide solutions that can achieve win-win outcomes and address the complex trade-offs between nutrition and the increasing food demands of a growing global population. Bonini pointed out the importance of not only relying on natural sciences but also integrating behavioural sciences to understand the choices people make regarding food and nutrition.

The session delved into how Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) can propel progress towards SDG 2, focusing on sustainable agrifood systems and food security. It stressed the importance of making STI accessible and adaptable while recognizing diverse knowledge sources. Key questions revolved around leveraging STI and traditional knowledge to transform agrifood systems sustainably. Speakers emphasized context-specific innovation, participatory approaches, and multisectoral collaboration, particularly highlighting challenges and opportunities in regions like Africa. Additionally, strategies to manage elements like nitrogen and phosphorus were discussed, emphasizing precision and technological advancements for sustainable agricultural production.

Mr Ibrahim Hathie highlighted Africa's significant challenges in achieving food security and nutrition, with 60 million people facing food insecurity. Mr Hathie identified drivers shaping the continent's agrifood systems, including rising incomes, urbanization, population growth, globalization, and digitalization, alongside climate change, land degradation, and energy sector growth. Mr Hathie emphasized the need for innovation and technology to be contextually adapted to Africa's specific needs. Mr Hathie pointed out the risks of mechanization being used as a political tool and the inequalities arising from its access being skewed towards larger farmers, leaving smallholders behind. The adaptability and sustainability of imported technology for local contexts were questioned, stressing the importance of innovations suited for small-scale farming, similar to successful examples from Asia. Mr Hathie called for institutional innovations

and arrangements to ensure small-scale farmers' access to mechanization and highlighted the need for efficient, low-cost irrigation schemes and renewable energy investments for farmers. Mr Hathie underlined the role of science in guiding policymakers through scenarios and the importance of capacity building with a participatory approach. The latest Africa review in 2023 revealed that 68 million people would suffer from food insecurity, underscoring the critical need for a holistic mechanization policy, technological and institutional organization to promote sustainable production, and the support of digital innovation for traceability and sustainable production practices. Financing, government interventions focusing on market regulation, and production increases were discussed alongside the necessity for investing in innovations that address water scarcity and adapt to environmental contexts.

Ms Chiara Villani from CIAT- CGIAR emphasized three main elements critical for achieving sustainable food security and fostering innovation, especially in the Global South. First, Ms Villani highlighted the importance of co-creating innovation with various stakeholders, particularly end-users, to ensure that partnerships leverage values and share ownership, emphasizing transparency and traceability. Second, Ms Villani stressed the need for a shift from traditional capacity building to capacity sharing, advocating for a co-development approach and triangular cooperation to facilitate the exchange of experiences among countries, tailored to national priorities. Third, Ms Villani underscored the necessity of a healthy environment as a foundational element for sustainable development. Ms Villani called for more multisectoral collaboration and interaction across ministries, addressing the challenges of subsidies and finances in the food system and the importance of supporting farmers through these trade-offs. Consumer awareness was highlighted as crucial for promoting products produced in more sustainable ways. Ms Villani described CGIAR's approach to innovation as evolving towards a more horizontal partnership model that leverages capacity and knowledge, focuses on mutual learning, and aligns research agendas with joint objectives. This new approach involves capacity sharing programmes that address both capacity building and knowledge sharing, facilitating mutual learning, educational opportunities, and South-South and triangular cooperation, all of which are designed to meet national priorities. Lastly, Ms Villani emphasized that innovation alone is insufficient without an enabling environment, calling for policies that encourage multisectoral collaboration, reorient subsidies and finances to support farmers, and raise consumer awareness about the benefits of healthy and nutritious food.

Ms Aline Mosnier addressed the challenge of managing nitrogen and phosphorus in relation to SDG 2, emphasizing the global issue of nitrogen being considered waste and the importance of

recognizing the planetary boundaries for these elements. Ms Mosnier noted that in regions like South America and Central America, there is potential to increase nitrogen usage for agricultural production. Ms Mosnier highlighted the necessity of contextualizing solutions and suggested encouraging trade measures and taxes in conjunction with technological advancements to reduce reliance on nitrogen-based fertilizers. Ms Mosnier identified the connection between production and demand as a pivotal issue, advocating for a reduction in animal protein consumption due to its link to nitrogen use in animal feed. Ms Mosnier stressed the importance of being precise in assumptions and aiming for productivity growth, suggesting that achieving desired productivity levels requires the establishment of a multi-stakeholder platform for comprehensive and targeted action.

Key messages and policy recommendations:

1. Foster an enabling environment for STI-based solutions to emerge, be adopted and be scaled up, through building on the knowledge of communities, farmers and Indigenous Peoples.
2. Enhance science and technology accessibility for small-scale farming and adaptability for context-specific solutions, analysis and modelling, including through producer organizations and production certification.
3. Shift to the co-creation of innovations involving a broad spectrum of stakeholders, particularly end-users, to foster partnerships that emphasize shared values and ownership, alongside ensuring transparency and traceability.
4. Encourage trade practices that reduce reliance on nitrogen-based fertilizers through a combination of taxation, technological advancements, and promoting a change in consumer behaviour.

Session 14. Partnership and Collaboration

In her opening remarks, Ms Fatouma Seid, Deputy Director, Division on Partnerships and UN Collaboration, FAO as the moderator of the session emphasized the session's goal to underline the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaboration across various sectors, including governments, civil society, the private sector, youth, and international organizations, towards achieving the SDGs. Ms Seid highlighted that while SDG 17 specifically addresses a 'global partnership for development', in reality, all SDGs necessitate significant collaboration across societal sectors. Ms Seid described multi-stakeholder partnering for the SDGs as a collaborative relationship among organizations from different sectors, aligning their interests

around a common vision, combining resources and competencies, and sharing risks to maximize value creation towards the SDGs. Ms Seid referenced the UN Food Systems Summit of 2021 as a demonstration of effective multi-stakeholder partnerships, with the emergence of 28 coalitions aimed at advancing agrifood systems transformations. Ms Seid acknowledged the challenges in forging such partnerships but posed questions on how to overcome these obstacles to ensure partnerships are transformative and contribute to the progress across all SDGs. Ms Seid called for innovation, collaboration, and a shared purpose in the discussions, aiming to uncover insights and strategies for effective multi-stakeholder partnering, particularly for SDG 2.

The session delved into the vital role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in advancing SDG 2 and transforming agrifood systems. Speakers emphasized inclusive engagement platforms recognizing the expertise of diverse stakeholders, including youth and marginalized groups. They highlighted the need for genuine dialogue, evidence-based decision-making, and holistic approaches within partnerships to maximize impact and sustainability. Insights from the floor emphasized innovative approaches needed in conflict countries, aligning towards sustainability objectives and local resilience.

Mr Facundo Etchebehere, Senior Vice President of Sustainability Strategy & Partnerships at Danone, highlighted the opportunity for more structured multi-stakeholder partnerships to accelerate SDG achievement. Mr Etchebehere stressed that such partnerships must be adapted to local contexts to address the different realities of various ecosystems and fully involve local actors. Mr Etchebehere also highlighted the significant potential for more Public-Private-Philanthropies Partnerships that combine the right expertise and align financing efforts, with the public sector as a convenor. Mr Etchebehere pointed to the example of the Water Access Acceleration Fund, which brings together development agencies, NGOs, and the private sector to channel investment into transformational measures.

Ms Belinda Ng, representing the Major Group for Children and Youth, advocated for equal partnership and leadership roles for youth, with genuine recognition provided on the diverse expertise and capabilities they bring to the table across the agrifood system. Ms Ng argued that inclusive engagement platforms are needs which would allow youth, as well as women, Indigenous Peoples, or other marginalized groups such as migrants and disabled individuals to co-design and co-lead are essential for ensuring a participatory approach to redesigning accessible local agrifood systems.

Ms Francine Picard, Director for Partnerships at the Shamba Centre for Food and Climate, reflected on the need emphasized the need for partnerships to be based on genuine dialogue, collaboration and co-creation, with stakeholder provided with ownership and sustainable financial support allow for lasting impact and implementation of real actions. She also called for discussions and decisions within the partnership to be grounded in evidence, leveraging scientific research and data, to ensure that strategies are based on the latest findings, measurable against targeted indicators and can be adjusted as new information becomes available. This was supported from the floor by Ms Lara Nasreddine who advocated for the need for the research communities to be involved in the design and implementation of proper impact assessment to guide such decision making– in countries with weak governmental capacities.

Ms Andrea Galante, Senior Policy Advisor for Food Security and Nutrition, Advocacy and External Engagement at World Vision International and representative of the Major Group - Together 2030, called for holistic approach within multistakeholder partnerships, which provide recognition of the interconnectedness of SDG 2 with other goals, to maximise impact. Ms Galante highlighted the School Meals Coalition as a model for partnerships among governments, civil society organizations, academia, private sector actors, and international organizations embodying this integrated approach, as well as evidence-based advocacy, capacity building, and active engagement of all stakeholders.

Speaking from the floor, Ms Maryam Rezaei and Inaya Ms Ezzeddine both stressed the need for innovation approaches to partnerships required in conflict countries, where the public sector and local governance is often weak and the need for humanitarian organizations, NGOs and private sector who instead fill this avoid being aligned in promoting sustainability objectives and local resilience.

Key messages and policy recommendations:

1. Pursue structured multi-stakeholder partnerships, to bring together diverse expertise and align financing efforts for maximum impact. These partnerships must foster genuine dialogue and collaboration and require ongoing support, including sustainable financial backing, to translate this dialogue into tangible actions with lasting impacts. The public sector must act as convener, enabling wider inclusion and to address any competitive issues within partnerships.

2. Ensure inclusive engagement, involving a wide range of stakeholders, including youth, local actors and marginalized groups, to enable bottom-up, participatory approaches that account for specific challenges faced by different communities.
3. Ground decision making in scientific research and data, through partnerships with different actors, including researchers, NGOs and local actors to develop effective and targeted strategies.
4. Adopt an integrated approach across SDGs/ goals, promoting community empowerment and participation, leveraging innovative technologies. Successful examples, such as the School Meals Coalition and community-driven initiatives like Citizen Voice and Action, demonstrate the effectiveness of collaborative efforts in achieving common objectives.
5. Implement innovative approaches in countries experiencing conflict and those with fragile local governance, to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are aligned on sustainability and health priorities.

In the concluding remark, Mr Stefanos Fotiou, Director, FAO Office of SDGs highlighted the necessity of a paradigm shift towards achieving SDG 2 and the broader agenda, emphasizing governance, human rights, and the role of investments.

To close the meeting, Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, the FAO Chief Economist delivered a compelling address highlighting the urgent need to transform agrifood systems to combat chronic undernourishment and achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) by 2030. Mr Torero emphasized that around 600 million people are projected to be chronically undernourished by 2030, necessitating immediate and significant changes in agrifood policies and systems. Torero identified numerous challenges, including simultaneous shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic, economic downturn, and risks stemming from climate change, among others.

To address these challenges, Mr Torero advocated for a two-pronged strategies: a preventive component featuring early warning systems and insurance mechanisms, and an absorptive component focused on enhancing social protection programmes and improving agricultural productivity and efficiency. He stressed the importance of increased financing for the agrifood systems, which, despite its environmental externalities, plays a crucial role in ensuring food security and achieving SDG2. Mr Torero called for better use of public resources and highlighted the significant potential of reducing food loss and waste, which can simultaneously boost food security, mitigate climate change, and improve sustainability. Mr Torero concluded by reinforcing

the need for gender equality and enhanced data quality to support evidence-based policymaking, emphasizing the critical role of international collaboration, science and innovation to improve global food security and nutrition.