



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

HLPF 2020 session: Ending Hunger and Achieving Food Security for All

Ms. Endah Murniningtyas- answers to guiding questions:

Key messages:

Ending hunger and achieving food security for all remain important before and after Covid-19. Covid-19 gave lessons that all SDGs aspects are tested on their vulnerability against Covid-19 shocks. Food and nutrition systems were attacked in every aspect, such as production and availability, access and distribution, nutrition intake and status on people. We need to review these food and nutrition systems to ensure that ending hunger and achieving food security for all are more resilient to future shocks.

Continuing improvement in making food security and nutrition patterns sustainable is key to ensure this effort is in harmony with other efforts to achieve Agenda 2030 on time. Rising urban populations and middle class that has changed diets and habits need to be transmitted to the production sides, including most importantly small-producers. Involvement of youth in making and updating improvement is key since they are important actors in future sustainable efforts. Implementation of innovation, technology and supported by IT is unavoidable to ensure that the effort in ending hunger and achieving food security is just, inclusive and sustainable.

Along the progress, there will be “pocket people” with food insecurity problems. Understanding their behavior and challenges is needed over time. Capacity in increasing knowledge about these groups along with others in the society is important to make sure that policy on ending hunger and food security is inclusive. Capacity and consistency in developing data and consistent implementation are fundamental and key to make sure that every effort in ending hunger and reducing food insecurity is not leaving anybody behind.

1. Which areas and socio-economic groups are especially vulnerable to poor nutrition and food insecurity and what are ways to ensure that food systems transformations leave no one behind?

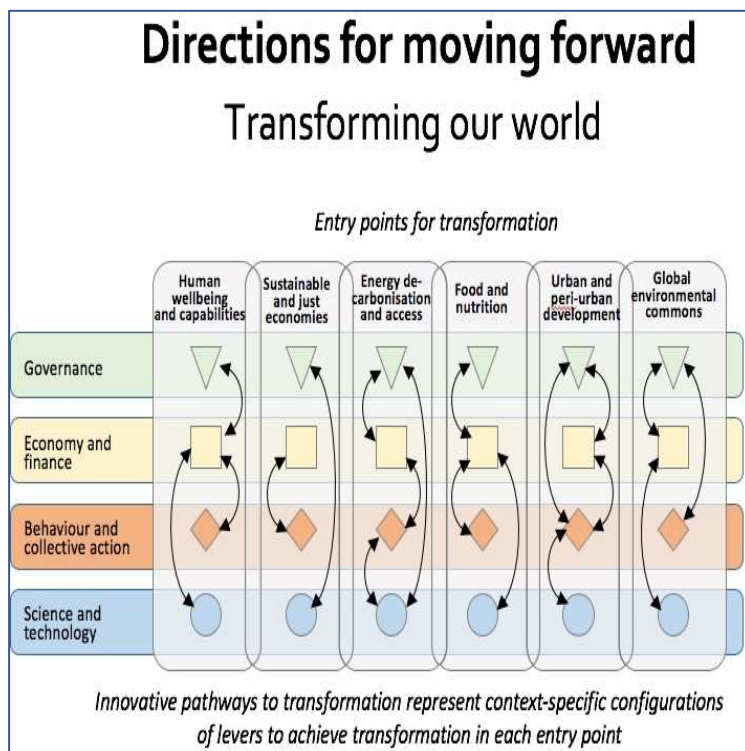
In general, people who live in remote areas (no connection to transportation) and at the border areas (whether borders between districts, between provinces and also between countries) are vulnerable to poor nutrition and food insecurity. These people are very sensitive to natural shock and small shock in food distributions, especially if they live in food deficit areas.

A more vulnerable group are also people who live under and near the poverty line because they are very sensitive to small shocks and small price changes. Within this group, children under 5-years old and the elderly who live alone and isolated are the most vulnerable.

Beside a generic food and nutrition program to ensure access to nutritious food for everybody, specific intervention is needed. Food availability, especially local food sources coupled with a diversified diet, is very important to ensure they have access to food at any time. A special type of social protection is also needed to ensure that they are not left behind. Data, however, is key so that social protection programs protect the right target of people. This social protection programs need to be executed locally and flexibly according to the very local situations.

2. What fundamental changes are needed to make our food systems an engine for inclusive growth and contribute to accelerating progress towards ending hunger and achieving food security for all in the Decade of Action?

As stated previously, progress has already been made to build synergies and address trade-offs through food system, because there are interactions across goal and also across target in the SDGs. GSDR 2019 examines this and suggests a system approach instead of looking at 17 SDGs goal by goal, to achieve Agenda 2030 on time. The system approach can be started through six entry point for transformation, which are: human wellbeing; sustainable and just economies; energy; sustainable urban and peri-urban; environment global commons. Ending hunger and achieving food security for all should be part of entry transformation in sustainable food system and nutrition patterns. All stakeholders should work to make substantial changes to existing infrastructure, policies, regulations and norm and preferences to transition towards food and healthy nutrition that foster universal good health and eliminate malnutrition while minimizing environmental impact. All countries must take responsibility for the entire value chain related to their food consumption to improve quality, build resilience and reduce environmental impact¹.



¹ The Future is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development. GSDR 2019. United Nations, New York 2019.

To transform food system and nutrition patterns, and determine who are the actors for transformations, who suffer from food insecurity and hunger; and determine what best policy interventions are suitable to them, one must examine the food system along the value chain and in particular should look carefully at the food system using a dendritic approach. Because more than two decades, there has been changes in the entire food value chain. At Downstream demand-side change “pulling” system transformation: (a) urbanization; (b) diet change. At the Midstream/downstream change “intermediating” system transformation: (c) change in retail, wholesale, logistics and processing. Upstream change “feeding” system transformation: (d) intensification in farming; (e) farm input supply change².

Based on the above, a small change is change in our diets by utilizing and consuming local organic products. Consuming local organic products which are usually produced in small scale, will still ensure food security and nutrition and: (i) maintain and promote small producers, therefore is more inclusive; (ii) maintain and increase local employment, reduce jobs; (iii) conserve nature by supporting organic products, then is more sustainable; (iv) and if purchased through direct buying by using social media which usually is done by young producers or young marketers, then it will increase farming interest among youth. There is a trade-off however, that this will not be able to be done by independent traditional smallholders. In order to mitigate this, we need to support young producers to be “the pulling actors” by mediating more and more independent traditional producers to connect with the change in consumers’ diet, change of urban behaviour and change in marketing/retailing behaviour.

3. How might COVID-19 facilitate or complicate the implementation of needed food systems changes?

Even before Covid-19, vulnerable groups were people under the poverty line and near the poverty line which are very vulnerable, in particular children under 5-years old and elderly who live alone and isolated. These people are both producers (income earners) and consumers at the same time. Covid-19 has aggravate the current situation of vulnerable groups and also made new group become vulnerable, the “new unemployed people”.

As poor consumers they are very sensitive to changes in: (i) Distribution shocks due to slow distributions or even more when food distribution is limited because of area lockdown; (ii) Price increase, especially in the non-producing area. When supply is low, price is easily increased and they are the most suffering and hard hit by this effect; (iii) Sudden income loss due to reduction in work-shift, reduction in work-days and even lay-off. Low or no saving change them suddenly into a very poor household.

During Covid-19 event, vulnerabilities not only exist among consumers but also producers. Small producers (small and independent producers; producers who depend on collectors, and even who are part of supply-chain) who depend on commodity collectors and as parts of supply chain are suddenly losing their market and their income mean while they may bear production loan. Food demand also decreases due to lower income in aggregate. Price is very low and lower than the expenses they have. Some small producers dump their products, not harvesting their commodity. Some “strong” producers or producers who are members of cooperatives or associations use their products for charity.

² Reardon, T., *Agricultural Systems* (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agsy.2018.01.022>

In Indonesia, these people are part of all people affected by Covid-19. The effect of Covid-19 in Indonesia is predicted to reduce Indonesia's economic growth rate to between 1 and 4 percent. An estimate on the impact of Covid-19 on poverty will make it that 1.3 million more people will be pushed into poverty, and as many as 8.5 million more people will become poor under severe scenario. This kind of situation, which may also happen in other countries, makes the implementation of all SDGs essential and especially efforts to end hunger and food insecurity.

The shock caused by Covid-19 should be seen as a time to review our food system. In developing countries, a massive food security and nutrition program needs to be scaled up to eradicate food insecurity and stunting; while in emerging countries, directed actions catered according to local situation need to be developed, because this problem usually exists in the pockets of poverty area. Therefore, immediately we need to study the impact of Covid-19 on food security across countries and study also people's response to this event.

On the ground, people and community try to cope with the situation before government program arrives. This should be studied and fed back into policy formulations or reformulations. Covid-19 has given "a test" on the vulnerability of food policy in any nation, that a macro policy on food security is needed, but more importantly is how the macro food policy is implemented on the ground by local government with local people. Therefore, capacity of local government in analyzing local food insecurity is very important, so that it can use policy from and funded by central government and match them with local policy and local funding to secure food security suitable at the local level. This combination of policies needs general program funding from national level, but availability of more flexible funds that can be used by local government to act quickly, to act flexibly to local needs are very important.

4. What knowledge and data gaps need to be filled for better analyzing current successes and failures in food systems and the trade-offs and synergies, across SDGs, in implementing food systems changes to fix these failures?

The Covid-19 shocks to food security system need the following knowledge:

- Knowledge on the "new" behavior of actors along the food supply-chain, how consumers (rich and poor) behave and their coping mechanism when there is problem in food security.
- Knowledge on "food corporation" behavior during sudden shocks and how they need to "maintain" the supply chain.
- Knowledge on poor people behavior and their coping mechanism, which are very diverse in a country like Indonesia; and I think it is also true in other developing and emerging countries.
- Reliable data on vulnerable people and its update mechanism on vulnerable people is key for accurate targeting social protection program. Availability of this data can be part of data development for SDGs to ensure no one is left behind.
- Cross country/regional study is needed to fix food policy in the future.

5. What partnerships and initiatives are needed to harness synergies and/or reduce trade-offs in food systems?

There are three partnerships and initiatives that we can learn from for this Covid-19 shock to food security system:

The first partnership that we can do is to increase capacity in developing countries and emerging economies to have food security policy that is able to combine between strong and resilient national food policy but not against trade and multilateral cooperation and partnership. This includes an understanding and also analytical capacity on scientist and especially universities, national and local (in the case of diverse and decentralized country like Indonesia).

Second partnership would be how to increase and support youth involvement in food and nutrition system at large, so that traditional agriculture, especially among smallholders, is able to connect with urbanized consumers.

Third, we need private companies that can also mitigate the shocks, so that they will not leave their small partners during the shock but adapt with them. This needs to be explored and tried through partnership.

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