



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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

Ms. Ruth K. Oniango- answers to guiding questions:

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?

We have always had the most vulnerable as children below 5 years, women of reproductive age, the old, people living with disability and the sick. This has not changed; they are still the most vulnerable to poor nutrition and food insecurity. We can also add displaced people. And again, government action and social safety nets are needed to address these inequities.

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?

There is enough food in the world to feed everyone, yet where it is it is wasted, and where it isn't people go hungry and sometimes starve.

a) How could they be designed and implemented to generate synergies and strengthen existing ones with other Goals and Targets?

At the end of the day, more than ever before, governments need to realize that hunger is a major security risk. In times of emergency, or job loss, the first worry is: what will my family eat? It is particularly difficult for young children who clearly will not understand what is going on at the time.

b) What are some of the possible trade-offs from these changes and how can they be mitigated?

It takes proper budgeting; money will always be in short supply even for robust economies. It is incumbent on governments to have food reserves, build up an emergency fund, and make a deliberate effort to develop a targeting tool so that when the time comes, one can quickly serve the targeted vulnerable groups. Hunger does not wait. Some governments will have Disaster Management protocols. Unfortunately, once an emergency emerges, they even forget such protocols exist. Drills are important to remind what should happen when the situation arises.

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

All over, it has not escaped anyone that in an emergency such as this one, food is a matter of priority.

- a) Will it aggravate and/or reduce vulnerabilities?

From where I sit, we have seen that COVID-19 is aggravating vulnerabilities. This could have been avoided if the situation on the ground was understood, and if time was taken to warn citizens, and if decisions were not just made haphazardly.

- b) What are the changes in design and implementation of policies affecting food systems which are necessary to prevent and better deal with food security and nutrition impacts of infectious disease outbreaks and pandemics in the future?

Agriculture is being looked at to recommend a set of foods that are nutritious.

- c) What of the current immediate actions we are seeing will contribute to the long-term resilience of food systems?

Appreciation of nutrition, to build the body's immune system.

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?

What changes are being made internally, that could spur local growth, and a refocus on indigenous foods.

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

- a) What are the most critical interventions and partnerships needed over next 2 years, 5 years, 10 years?

Sharing of survival, food coping strategies.

- b) Can these be scaled up or adjusted to fit other contexts?

Cannot know unless we know what these are.

- c) How can private sector support investments for sustainable agriculture production and supply reduce food insecurity?

Be more proactive and offer some solutions that they have to governments.