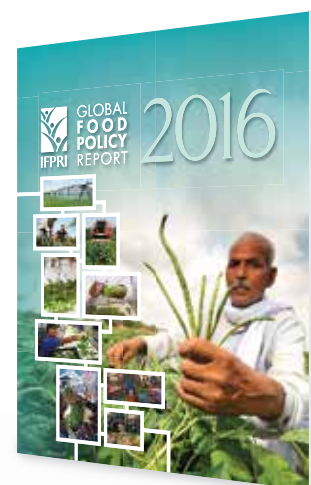




2016 GLOBAL FOOD POLICY REPORT

March 2016

The year 2015 was a watershed moment for the international development community. The endpoint of the Millennium Development Goals highlighted the striking advances made since 1990: extreme poverty, child mortality, and hunger all fell by around half. However, enormous challenges remain. The *2016 Global Food Policy Report* reviews major trends, events, and changes affecting food security and nutrition in 2015 and beyond, and explores how the global food system can best contribute to further reductions in hunger, malnutrition, and poverty while ensuring sustainable use of the world's resources. The year 2016 will be critical for moving from new global and national commitments to action.



2015 IN REVIEW

When the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September, a new chapter opened for food security and nutrition. The 17 goals that now will anchor the development agenda for the next 15 years are truly global, and at their core are SDGs 1 and 2, which call for ending poverty and hunger, including all forms of malnutrition, by 2030.

A global conference in July in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on financing development also led to new international agreements, including a social compact to provide all people with basic services, and a commitment to universal secondary education and equal economic rights for women.

The end of the year saw additional global decisions. In December, the COP21 climate change meeting in Paris marked a new approach to coping with climate change, moving away from mandated cuts in greenhouse gases (GHGs) and instead allowing countries to put forward their own plans for lowering domestic emissions. With a goal of keeping the average global temperature increase below 2 degrees Celsius, 188 countries submitted plans for slowing the pace of growth of GHG emissions.

And the World Trade Organization's ministerial meeting in Nairobi in December resulted in a package of important decisions, including a commitment to eliminate subsidies for farm exports and to seek a permanent solution on treatment of countries' public holdings of food stocks for food security purposes.

Many other developments in 2015 highlighted the interconnectedness of the world's countries and people. Overall global economic growth was disappointingly slow, at 2.4 percent, amid slow growth in the emerging economies. A number of factors influenced the continued downward slide of world food prices, including plentiful supplies coupled with modest demand, as well as appreciation of the US dollar. World oil prices also fell dramatically, reaching their lowest level in 11 years at the end of the year.

A series of natural shocks buffeted countries, regions, and food systems across the world in 2015. Flooding in southern Africa, drought in Central America, and a major earthquake in Nepal led to widespread food insecurity. In March, a strong El Niño weather pattern commenced, with severe effects for food security in several regions, including one of the worst droughts in decades in Ethiopia.

The number of displaced people reached unprecedented crisis proportions. Although conflicts in various countries contributed to the massive movements of people, the civil war in Syria is responsible for the bulk of the displaced people. The flow of refugees not only represents hardship and risk for the displaced people themselves, but also daunting challenges for the host communities and for the international humanitarian system.

Positive change was also notable. East Asia and China made new commitments to food safety, and food policy advances were made in South Asia. Central Asian countries are adopting policies for food safety and improved nutrition. Africa saw the end of the Ebola epidemic and the launch of new initiatives for climate-smart agriculture. And many Latin American countries have adopted a regional food security plan, committing themselves to eliminate hunger by 2025.

BUILDING A FOOD SYSTEM THAT WORKS FOR PEOPLE AND THE PLANET

As the global community takes on the SDGs, we are also moving toward more comprehensive—or system-level—thinking to tackle the complex issues of poverty, hunger, and malnutrition. The *2016 Global Food Policy Report* explores how we can develop a food system that is inclusive, climate-smart,

sustainable, efficient, nutrition- and health-driven, and business-friendly, in order to improve the well-being of people and the planet.

Inclusive

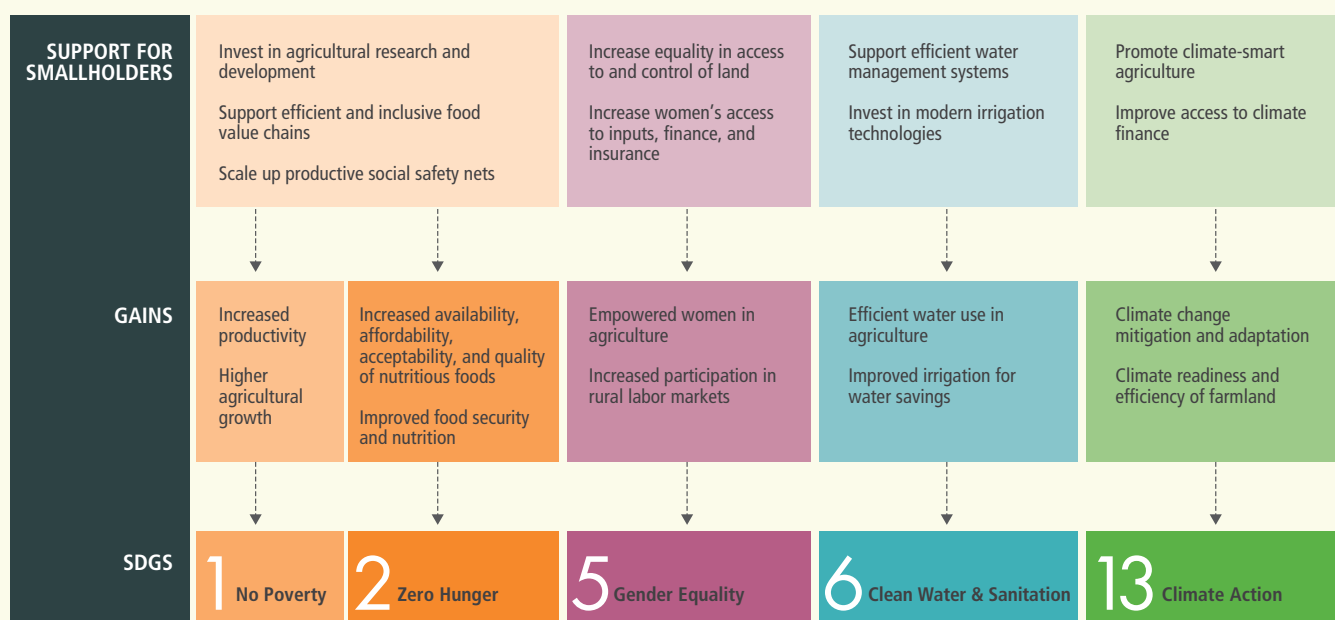
Smallholders play a critical role in ending hunger and malnutrition and in climate action, as their farms provide income, employment, and food for billions of people in many developing countries. And yet, they also comprise half of the world's hungry. Smallholders, particularly women and youth, are often poor and marginalized—they face constrained access to assets and markets, are at risk of exclusion from increasingly complex food value chains, and are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Maximizing the potential of commercially viable smallholder farms and empowering women and youth to participate in food systems is critical for their food security and nutrition.

The success of smallholders is also central to achieving several SDGs and climate change goals. A broad range of policies—from investing in inclusive value chains and improving access to inputs and financial resources to developing sustainable technologies—could help smallholders shift toward producing more nutritious and profitable foods and enable them to contribute to achieving many of the SDGs (Figure 1).

Climate-smart

Climate change is already having significant impacts on crop yields and is expected to decrease yields even more in

FIGURE 1 Selected examples of how smallholders can contribute to multiple SDGs



Source: Authors' compilation.

Note: For a more comprehensive table, see the *2016 Global Food Policy Report*.

coming decades. Smallholder farmers are particularly vulnerable to the extreme weather events associated with climate change, which is why building a climate-smart food system can increase both smallholder resilience and food security. We need to develop win-win strategies and technologies for climate-smart management of soils, water, and energy that not only increase productivity, but also improve food security and nutrition and help farmers mitigate or adapt to climate change. A number of such technologies suitable for smallholders have already been identified, including zero-till farming, resilient crop varieties, and agroforestry systems.

Sustainable

A sustainable food system efficiently meets current and emerging demand for food without jeopardizing scarce natural resources. At present, resource use in agriculture is unsustainable. As much as 85 percent of global water use goes to agricultural irrigation, of which 15–35 percent is thought to be unsustainable. Nearly a quarter of all global land has been affected by environmental degradation. And energy use throughout the food system—from production to food preparation—contributes to GHG emissions.

Sustainable agriculture intensification, although still poorly defined, offers a path to greater food security and nutrition without sacrificing the environment. Researchers have identified a number of agricultural technologies that can reduce trade-offs among sustainability, food security, and nutrition—and even exploit synergies among them. These technologies can also help promote soil health and sustainable land management; ensure ecosystem services, such as habitats for beneficial insects and pollinators; and promote human health.

Potential investments to increase sustainability of water use include lining irrigation canals, installing modern drip or sprinkler irrigation systems, and providing financial incentives for farmers to adopt resource-efficient technologies. Green energy also offers opportunities for meeting the world's food needs more sustainably, including greater use of renewable energy, such as hydro and solar power, careful management of biofuels, and more efficient cookstoves.

Global diets are also on an unsustainable trajectory. Increasing numbers of people are consuming more calories than they need for a healthy and active life, consuming more protein than they require, and shifting their consumption toward animal-based protein, particularly beef, which is an inefficient and resource-intensive food source. These trends impose high costs, not only in terms of human health and nutrition, but also in terms of the environment, through land use and GHG emissions. New strategies are needed to shift overconsumers toward a more sustainable diet.

Efficient

The global food system must be resource-efficient to meet current and emerging demand for food without jeopardizing the availability of scarce resources. Innovations to increase the productivity of land, water, and energy will be critical for an efficient food system. In addition, food loss and waste constitute a large source of inefficiency in our food system. Globally, the share of food lost and wasted at various stages of the food value chain is estimated to be in the realm of 30 percent. Beyond the implications for food security, lost or wasted food has high environmental costs. Becoming more efficient will require better measurement of food loss and waste and investments to improve infrastructure, technology, transportation, and distribution at appropriate points along the supply chain, as well as consumer education about food waste.

Nutrition- and health-driven

A nutrition- and health-driven food system is one that ensures that the nutritional value of food is maintained or increased throughout the value chain, and takes account of critical links to other sectors, such as the importance of water to nutrition and health. Various types of value chain interventions can promote both nutrition and sustainability, including interventions to expand supplies of nutritious foods, to increase demand for those foods, or to improve the functioning of value chains through better information or regulation. Promising options include nutrition education for consumers, “cold chains” that help keep perishable foods fresh, and contract farming arrangements that encourage farmers to grow nutritious crops.

Access to clean water for drinking and sanitation can reduce the prevalence of diseases linked to undernutrition and stunting. There are many potential benefits of coordinating water, nutrition, and health interventions, including reductions in chronic undernutrition and disease as well as improvements in diets, livelihoods, and sustainable and equitable water use. Gender also plays an important role here—empowering women in agriculture through access to value chains and to water for agriculture and domestic use can help improve dietary diversity and reduce child stunting.

Business-friendly

Global, national, and local food systems must be supported by well-functioning markets and by an environment that supports food-system entrepreneurs. Supporting small farms as businesses, including providing access to markets, credit, information, and other assets, can increase the benefits of food systems to smallholders, including women and youth, and improve their contribution to food security, national economies, and the SDGs. Private-sector participation in the global food system can help push forward critical advances in technology, productivity, and other outcomes—as long as it

is supported by transportation, communication, and energy infrastructure; availability of financing; and agricultural research and extension services.

A FOOD SYSTEM WE CAN ALL THRIVE IN

A global food system that embraces the suggestions above would contribute to achieving the SDGs related to food security and nutrition, gender equity, water and sanitation,

employment, and land use, as well as to the COP21 commitments. And it could help the world end hunger and under-nutrition by 2025, a goal adopted by the International Food Policy Research Institute in 2015, joined by several countries and partners, through the Compact2025 initiative. Changing the global food system will not be easy. But having a vision of where we want to be is a vital first step. And as the authors of the *2016 Global Food Policy Report* suggest, a food system that supports a healthy, well-nourished population and a healthy planet can be sustained for generations.

MORE ABOUT THE 2016 REPORT

The *2016 Global Food Policy Report* provides perspective on the major food policy issues, developments, and decisions of 2015 and highlights challenges and opportunities for 2016.

- ▶ **Food Policy in 2015–2016:** Reshaping the Global Food System for Sustainable Development
- ▶ **Climate Change and Agriculture:** Strengthening the Role of Smallholders
- ▶ **Toward a Sustainable Food System:** Reducing Food Loss and Waste
- ▶ **Water, Nutrition, and Health:** Finding Win-Win Strategies for Water Management
- ▶ **Land and Soil Management:** Promoting Healthy Soils for Healthier Agricultural Systems
- ▶ **Green Energy:** Fueling the Path to Food Security
- ▶ **Nutrition and Sustainability:** Harnessing Value Chains to Improve Food Systems
- ▶ **Shifting Diets:** Toward a Sustainable Food Future
- ▶ **Regional Developments**

The *2016 Global Food Policy Report* also presents data for several key food policy indicators, including country-level data on hunger, agricultural spending, agricultural research investment, and capacity for food policy research. In addition to illustrative figures, tables, and a timeline of food policy events in 2015, the report presents the results of a global opinion poll on the current state of food policy.

The full text of this year's report, including indicators with an interactive display of the data, is available online at <http://www.ifpri.org/gfpr/2016>.

This publication is based on the peer-reviewed report, *2016 Global Food Policy Report*, published by the International Food Policy Research Institute.

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