

BLOG: Transformation towards sustainable, resilient and healthy societies

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The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are profoundly transformative, cutting across technical sectors and providing a united vision for all nations. The 2018 theme of the [High-Level Political Forum](#) ‘*transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies*’ provides an opportunity to look at the underlying conditions and drivers necessary to meet the SDGs. Good nutrition is one such building block and lies at the heart of human health and wellbeing.

An outcome of the [SDG2 Expert Group Meeting \(EGM\)](#) held in June 2017 was that sustainable and healthy diets support not only the achievement of SDG2 but of all the SDGs. “The key messages of the EGM on SDG2 were echoed in the HLPF Ministerial Declaration, the summary of the President of ECOSOC and in the HLPF debates themselves” explained Carla Mucavi, Director of the FAO Office in New York.

At the [UNSCN convened EGM Linking Nutrition with the SDGs under Review](#) in June 2018, experts represented a wide range of disciplines from academia, research institutes, private sector, UN and civil society. Some were nutritionists, some were technical experts from Member States, and others were experts from sectors that deal specifically with the five SDGs under review (SDG6, SDG7, SDG11, SDG12 and SDG15). This diversity was intentional in order ensure that the SDGs were examined from various angles, highlighting how nutrition can be a connecting force between the SDGs and a catalyst to their achievement - closely interconnected and indivisible.

“As we know, the challenge of nutrition is not just related to health and food. The complexities driving malnutrition go beyond that; and in my view, for any country to achieve any one of the 17 SDGs, nutrition will have to be in the front and center of their agendas, not just Goal 2 and Zero Hunger” emphasized Ambassador Mario Arvelo, Chair of the [Committee on World Food Security](#). “This expert group meeting help(s) bring Rome closer to New York – and vice versa - by highlighting the many interlinkages between food security, nutrition and all the SDGs.”

After a day and a half of deliberations, the following messages were delivered to the Member State Briefing on 20 June by Stineke Oenema, UNSCN Coordinator. These outcomes will be further refined and are meant to provide concrete, actionable nutrition inputs beyond the 2018 HLPF and its [related UNSCN-CFS event](#), to the plenary of the 45th session of the CFS in October 2018.

- **SDG6 - Water:** Decisions around water infrastructure use should be driven with a goal to achieve sustainable, equitable, and nutritious food systems. SDG 6.2 and 6.4 are essential to improving nutritional outcomes.
- **SDG 7 - Energy:** Considering the interlinkages in the 2030 Agenda and the importance of the food, water and energy nexus and its impact on the environment and health, there is a need to encourage the transition towards food systems that promote sustainable use of resources and safeguards the environment.
- **SDG 11 - Cities and settlements:** Cities and urban settings face the full array of nutrition problems. Solutions must link the full spectre from rural to urban settings and consider the heterogeneity of

conditions and populations found in both. This requires local leadership and governance, as well as convergence and coherence among the efforts in the different sectors and levels of policies, encouraging interdepartmental and cross-sectoral coordination. Applying a nutrition lens should ensure planning for appropriate nutrition-related provision of accessible infrastructure and services and the creation of inclusive, just, and sustainable nutritious food systems that avoid waste and environmental harm.

- **SDG 12 - Sustainable consumption and production:** The transformation of food systems, policies and practices, should guarantee sustainable and nutritious diets by encouraging public procurement schemes that promote locally-sourced foods and regulate the availability of ultra-processed foods, promote the rights of small-scale farmers and support, and pro-actively consider indigenous and local knowledge as instrumental to achieving the goal.
- **SDG 15 - Territorial ecosystems:** Agricultural biodiversity – the diversity of plants, animals and other organisms used for food both cultivated and wild – is a critical element in response to global malnutrition and underpins healthy, nutritious and sustainable diets, and contributing to general ecosystem balance, functioning and service increasing our ability to adapt to climate change. Member States are encouraged to increase the quality and quantity of technical and financial support to agricultural biodiversity and its custodians, on farm and in situ. (SDG 15.B 1).
- **Cross-cutting messages:** A comprehensive review of policies and an inclusive effort spanning both the public and private sectors are necessary for ensuring the mainstreaming of nutrition goals. Policy coherence for nutrition is essential and reference is made to UNGA Resolution 68/177 paragraph 25 which states coherence between trade and nutrition policies is vital. Member States and multilateral agencies are encouraged to strengthen efforts to implement the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action.

The different EGMs (2017 and 2018) have shown that there is a need to address the interlinkages between the SDGs in a more comprehensive way. The current design of the HLPF programme offers important opportunities in this regard. Therefore, UNDESA was encouraged to reserve one day during the HLPF 2019 to innovate new approaches for follow up and review and call upon Member States to support this process.