



Break down barriers to end world hunger by 2030

Press release

(Istanbul, 24 May 2016) - At the World Humanitarian Summit, leaders from governments, United Nations, inter-governmental, regional and non-governmental organizations confirmed that achieving Zero Hunger and malnutrition in all its forms by 2030 is possible.

However, they emphasized that it requires urgent action, leadership and new ways of thinking and working together to break down the barriers between humanitarian and development approaches. It also requires longer term financing and partnerships with the private sector, international financing institutions, and above all, societies which ultimately decides not to leave anyone behind.

His Excellency Michael D Higgins, President of Ireland, addressed the side event on Zero Hunger noting that “today, we have the opportunity to state with clarity and certainty that the source of global hunger is not a lack of food. Rather, it is the persistence of poverty and inequality in our societies. Unequal rights, opportunities and protection deepen the global problem of hunger amongst millions, with all its consequences for women, men and above all children”.

Access to food, water and health services that form the basis of healthy and diverse diets and lives is intricately linked to both rights – particularly equity and women’s rights – and resilience to future shocks. In his report for the World Humanitarian Summit, the United Nations Secretary-General argues that immediate, life-saving assistance must be part of long term efforts to reduce needs and vulnerability and develop resilient women and men, households and communities. Women are critical for strong communities as caretakers and home providers, as food producers and decision makers, and ensuring the wellbeing of the whole family.

Long term efforts also mean a shift in focus to local and national institutions wherever possible, and recognition that national social welfare and safety nets, health systems, and local community organisations can all play an important role in preventing and preparing for disasters and in responding to crises.

The Director-General of FAO, Mr. Jose Graziano da Silva, emphasised that “ending poverty, hunger and malnutrition must become the basis of a new social contract in which no one is left behind. We have a second chance. This is what the SDGs are all about and it is key to resolving the world humanitarian crisis”.

Ertharin Cousin, World Food Programme’s Executive Director, advocated for “moving forward from persistent food crisis demands, reducing and transferring risk, strengthening people’s own capacities for resilience and truly uniting humanitarian and development actions that people on the front line of climate-change, hunger and poverty require and deserve”.

“Building resilience to disasters does work and saves communities from suffering. However, there has to be a global commitment to invest in preparedness and long-term development,” said Josefina Stubbs, Associate Vice-President, International Fund for Agricultural Development.

“If we want to reach zero hunger, we need to go beyond the simple response of food,” said Action Against Hunger CEO Andrea Tamburini. “We must work together, and embrace a holistic approach of nutrition security – including all elements that lead to a healthy and well-nourished life – water, health care, education, strong livelihoods and strong communities. If we focus on food



and provision and production of food only, we will not be able to reach our target by 2030. Full, and holistic commitment will be necessary”.

Ambassador Amira Gornass, the Chair of the Committee on Food Security said “a global policy shift is needed if we truly want to achieve Zero Hunger. The Committee on World Food Security’s Framework for Action on Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises, endorsed globally in 2014, says how we can achieve this shift. I commend FAO and WFP for upholding this framework in their commitments at this Summit and I urge all countries and UN agencies to do the same”.

In closing, the Irish President said that “ensuring that we ‘leave no-one behind’ requires us to acknowledge and systematically address hunger and inequality for what they are: an injustice, a breach of rights. In Ireland, our own history of famine and emigration has defined us as a people. Consciousness now compels us that we should, as an independent state, recognise our common interest in tackling the persistence of famine and displacement in our world today”.

Note for the editor

According to the World Health Organization, nearly 800 million people are chronically undernourished, 159 million children under 5 years of age are stunted, around 50 million children under 5 are wasted, more than 2 billion people suffer from micronutrient deficiencies and 1.9 billion people are overweight, of which more than 600 million are obese.

The Secretary-General’s Zero Hunger Challenge was launched in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. The Zero Hunger Challenge aims to bring together all stakeholders to communicate the importance of nutrition security, as a holistic approach and nutrition and inclusive, sustainable and resilient agriculture as a key element to delivering on the promise of the 2030 Agenda, and to encourage, engage, accelerate and amplify collective action to create food systems that deliver for all people (for more information see www.zerohungerchallenge.org).

In September 2015, countries adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 is to “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”. The SDGs aim to end all forms of hunger and malnutrition by 2030, making sure all people – especially children and the most vulnerable – have access to sufficient, healthy and nutritious food all year round. As a maker and marker of development, nutrition is central to the achievement of the SDGs.

In April 2016, UN Member States agreed to intensify action to end hunger and eradicate malnutrition, and ensure universal access to healthier and more sustainable diets by proclaiming a UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025). By agreeing on resolution A/RES/70/259, governments endorsed the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and Framework for Action adopted by the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) in November 2014. The UN resolution calls upon FAO and WHO to lead the implementation of the Decade of Action on Nutrition, in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and involving coordination mechanisms such as the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN) and multi-stakeholder platforms such as the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).