



From Fragmentation to Focus

A Shared SDG2 Agenda for the Last Mile to 2030



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Executive Summary

Purpose

This paper argues that the Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG2) community faces a decisive moment. After decades of concerted efforts to end hunger and malnutrition, the world is no longer on track to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030. The challenge is not a lack of evidence, solutions, or institutions; it is a failure to align, finance, coordinate, and deliver at scale in a far more complex geopolitical and fiscal environment.

The central message is clear: it is the time to protect hard-won gains, prevent further backsliding, and accelerate integrated investments in resilient food systems, nutrition, rural livelihoods, and national systems. The SDG2 community should focus on fewer, bigger priorities; make a stronger public and political case for action; and use existing mechanisms more effectively rather than creating new initiatives.

Why this Matters Now

The world has made remarkable progress since 1990, including major reductions in hunger, child mortality, and childhood stunting. Yet that progress is now at risk. In 2024, hundreds of millions of people still faced hunger, acute food insecurity continued to rise, hunger increased in Africa, and stunting rose for the first time in a decade. Rural communities remain disproportionately affected, despite producing much of the world's food.

Multiple overlapping pressures are driving this reversal: conflict, climate change, food and fertiliser price volatility, unsustainable debt, weakened multilateralism, shrinking civic space, and steep cuts to official development assistance. These shocks are occurring while food systems themselves are under strain from environmental degradation, inequitable power dynamics, changing demographics, and growing demand for affordable, healthy, and sustainable diets.

The financing environment has changed fundamentally. ODA is declining and becoming more transactional, while humanitarian needs continue to grow. Development financing for agriculture, food security, and nutrition has been especially affected. At the same time, low- and middle-income countries face limited fiscal space because of debt burdens and rising debt service costs, forcing difficult trade-offs.

The SDG2 architecture is fragmented. Overlapping mandates, earmarked funding, competing initiatives, and vertical financing models dilute impact and burden national governments.

Concurrently, public support is eroding as cost-of-living pressures and declining trust in institutions. This has created not only a resource crisis, but also a coordination, prioritisation, and narrative crisis.

Reasons for Hope

Despite the difficult context, there are important openings for progress. African leadership through the Kampala Declaration and CAADP 2026–2035 provides a strong regional policy framework. Paris Nutrition for Growth, SUN 4.0, and the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty have renewed attention to country leadership, sustainable financing, and evidence-based policies. Champions such as Brazil, France, Ireland, Norway, and Spain are helping keep hunger, nutrition, and food systems transformation on the global agenda.

There are also significant financing opportunities if the SDG2 community can make a stronger investment case. Multilateral development banks, concessional lending windows, [IFAD](#), [Global Agriculture and Food Security Program](#) (GAFSP), the [Green Climate Fund](#), the [Global Financing Facility](#), the [Child Nutrition Fund](#), Special Drawing Rights, debt pause clauses, blended finance, guarantees, domestic resource mobilisation, and subsidy repurposing can all be better aligned to support food security, nutrition, rural livelihoods, and resilient food systems.

Crucially, proven solutions already exist. Evidence-based interventions include social protection (food vouchers and cash transfers), smallholder farmer organisations, climate-resilient agriculture, nutrition-specific interventions, large-scale food fortification, school meals, sustainable aquaculture and livestock, diversified production, post-harvest loss reduction, and food systems policies that improve diets while supporting climate and livelihood goals. Where bundled, these interventions can drive progress on multiple fronts with less financing.

Proposed Advocacy Framework

The paper proposes four pillars for SDG2 advocacy over the next two years:

1. Protect and accelerate progress

Prevent backsliding by investing in resilience, crisis preparedness, social protection, wasting prevention and treatment, healthy food environments, fertiliser diversification, and fiscal tools such as debt pause clauses. Africa should be a central focus because hunger is rising there and strong policy frameworks already exist.

2. Shift to systems, not silos

Layer investments in rural areas; integrate nutrition across agriculture, health, social protection, climate, and education; strengthen data systems; and champion scalable, evidence-based approaches that deliver multiple benefits.

3. Finance differently

Align financing with national priorities; invest in long-term and flexible public finance; reduce fragmentation; integrate humanitarian, development, and climate finance; and use concessional finance, philanthropy, guarantees, subsidies, and domestic resources to mobilise wider investment.

4. Deliver through leadership and accountability

Build a shared public narrative, elevate credible champions, strengthen existing political and financing mechanisms, track delivery and outcomes, and invest in civil society and citizen engagement.

What this Means for the SDG2 Community

The advocacy community should move away from fragmented agendas and align around fewer, bigger priorities. It should develop a shared narrative that makes SDG2 relevant to public concerns in both donor and partner countries, including food prices, jobs, health, climate resilience, peace and security, and economic stability. It should also proactively propose reforms to reduce fragmentation in the global food and financing architecture and shift more power, resources, and accountability to national and local actors.

Trusted champions will be essential. Political leaders, practitioners, farmers, nutrition experts, food system actors, civil society, and other credible messengers can help translate technical evidence into public will and political action. The SDG2 community should identify, support, and coordinate these voices around a common agenda.

Priority Moments and Next Steps

The next 18 months offer important opportunities to shape the agenda: Ireland's Presidency of the European Union, the UK Presidencies of the G20 and G7, COP32 in Addis Ababa, the 2027 SDG Summit, and replenishments for IFAD, IDA, GAFSP, and the Green Climate Fund. These moments should be used to advance a coherent resilience, financing, reform, and accountability agenda for SDG2.

A recommended two-year action plan:

Next six months

Align the community around the four pillars, identify a small number of "big bets," and map champion voices.

Over the following 6–18 months

Drive coordinated advocacy, influence the UK G20 and G7, and COP32 agendas, and build financing coalitions.

By 2028

Use key funding and accountability moments to track progress, secure resources, and position SDG2 as central to the global development, climate, and resilience agenda.

Now is not the time to abandon SDG2 but to take coordinated action to protect the gains made over the last three decades, to build resilience and to accelerate transformative investments. We have the mechanisms and the solutions. We have robust pathways to diversify financing and opportunities to strengthen political will and leadership. With just four years left, we must meet the current moment with renewed commitment and collaboration. Inaction would condemn future generations to cycles of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition with destabilising impacts that reach across the globe.

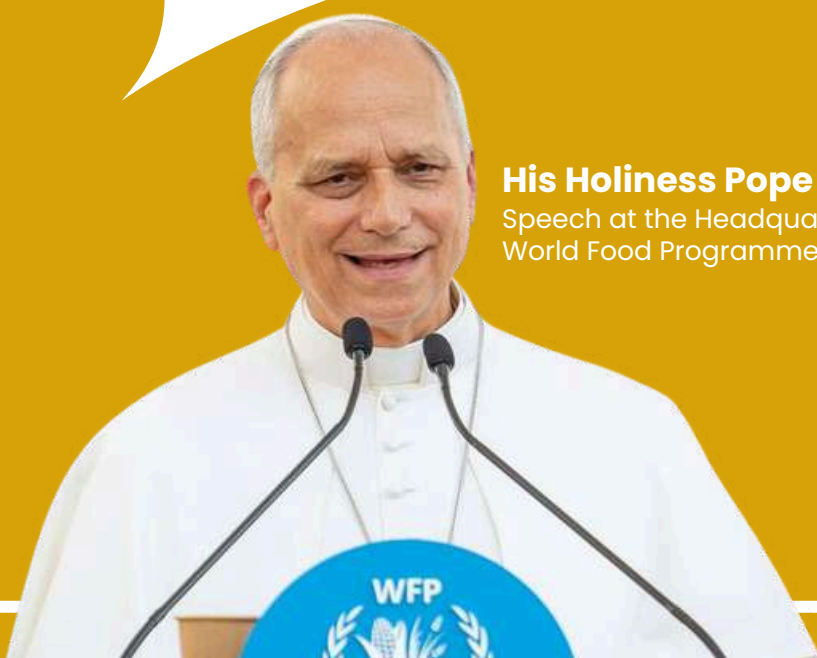
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Together, we share the urgent task of confronting hunger and malnutrition, while also tackling the underlying structural causes that sustain them....

In effect, conflicts are “fed” more readily than people are nourished. This reality reflects not only operational shortcomings but also a fundamental imbalance in political and moral priorities....

Food, water and healthcare cannot be subordinated to market considerations or geopolitical interests. Access to adequate food is a fundamental human right grounded in the dignity of every person. Meeting this need not only alleviates suffering but also addresses underlying causes of geopolitical instability. Indeed, food security is an essential component of global and integral security.

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His Holiness Pope Leo XIV

Speech at the Headquarters of the World Food Programme, June 2026



Farmer holding up SDG2 box
© Ban Ki-moon Foundation

Introduction

It is worth starting with some hope: in the last few decades the world has made significant, steady and sustained progress on hunger and malnutrition.

In 1990, nearly 1 in 4 people in the world experienced hunger. Despite all the challenges of the 2020s, in 2024 around 1 in 12 people were going hungry—too many by any standard but a vast improvement from 35 years prior. During this period, the world also saw a 60% reduction in child mortality, driven in part by a significant improvement in malnutrition in the critical 1,000 days between a woman’s pregnancy and her child’s second birthday. This includes childhood stunting rates, which declined from 40% in 1990 to 23% in 2024. This progress provided the impetus to establish the Global Goal to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030: SDG2.

But, with 4 years left until 2030, the world is not on track to achieve SDG2 and the window is closing. According to the 2025 SOFI report, based on 2024 data, as many as 673 million people were living with hunger— and while at the global level, it is a slight improvement over the previous year, an additional 335 million people experienced hunger than in 2019, before the COVID pandemic, and **hunger continues to increase in Africa**. Hunger and poverty remain largely rural: 32 percent of rural people are food insecure compared to 23.9 percent of people in urban areas. The number of people facing acute food insecurity has continued to rise over the last six years. Despite being the driving force behind our food systems, people in rural areas are more likely to be hungry and impoverished. Also, for the first time in a decade, **stunting rates have also increased**.

Persistent poverty and inequality and the impacts of conflict, climate change, unsustainable debt and economic shocks have heightened fragility, contributing to backsliding on hunger and malnutrition in Africa and slowing progress in other regions. These drivers existed prior to the dramatic cuts to ODA over the last 18 months and before the Middle East Crisis and its broader impacts on oil, fertiliser and food prices, and the “super” El Niño. We are now in a period of sustained, protracted crises and the systems we relied on at the beginning of the century are under stress.

We enter the countdown to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at a time of great geopolitical uncertainty. In fact, the only thing that is certain is that the uncertainty will remain for the foreseeable future and that the future global development and humanitarian sector will look very different.

At the same time, there is a much greater understanding and consciousness of these challenges, and there are opportunities to chart a new course. Policy makers all around the world are feeling the pressure to reduce food prices.

Low and lower-middle income countries recognise the urgency to strengthen national systems — including food, health and social protection systems —, invest in food systems transformation and rural development to create jobs and reduce poverty, adapt to climate change and improve nutrition outcomes, and to diversify sources of financing, including by mobilising domestic resources. They are increasingly focused on becoming self-sufficient, and reducing their dependence on donors and external markets/forces. Smallholder farmers are increasingly seen as agents of change to build resilient local and regional food systems, to address the impacts of climate change—through regenerative agriculture, agroforestry and conservation—and to deliver affordable, sustainable, and healthy diets.

As traditional sources of financing for SDG2 are severely diminished (development even more so than humanitarian) and the international community is focused on significant reform of the multilateral system, there is an urgent need to rethink approaches to financing and to re-examine advocacy priorities. There is a growing awareness of the need to tackle the underlying causes of food crises and invest in prevention, anticipatory and resilience building activities. This is not just a resource crisis. It is a coordination, prioritisation, and narrative crisis.

This discussion paper is intended to be a conversation starter for the SDG2 community to help align around some shared priorities in the lead up to 2030. It draws on a number of informal conversations with key stakeholders over the last few months as well as reflections and analysis within the global development and humanitarian space in response to the evershifting geopolitical and financing landscape. It begins with a look at some of the megatrends in the external environment that are affecting progress towards SDG2 and the impacts on the sector itself; takes stock of some of the initiatives, mechanisms and innovations available and the upcoming opportunities for action; and finally proposes a few areas for collective advocacy. **The challenge is no longer whether we know what to do. It is whether we can align, finance and deliver at scale—together—in a far more complex world.**



Chef Odi at the Marcus Addis for Africa
Climate Week
© SDG2 Advocacy Hub

The New Reality Facing Food Security and Food Systems Advocacy: What Has Changed

Global food systems are being buffeted by significant shifts and trends that are both direct and endogenous (internal to food systems) and indirect and exogenous (external factors). Some create opportunities that can be harnessed and others are challenges or problems that must be managed in order to protect and build on the progress of the last couple of decades. This section highlights some of the major trends affecting food systems and the enabling environment.

Trends within Global Food Systems

Volatility

Hunger levels remain higher than pre-pandemic levels. Around 600 million people are projected to be chronically undernourished in 2030.

About 2.6 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet.

Geopolitical tensions and climate events are contributing to food price volatility, supply chain and livelihood disruptions and more frequent food crises that disproportionately affect low income countries and vulnerable communities.

Most recently, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz has disrupted fuel, fertiliser and energy supplies, triggering a spike in prices that will

disproportionately impact developing countries and worsen food insecurity and poverty.

Food is also increasingly being used as a weapon of war, either through preventing aid from reaching local communities in need of humanitarian aid or the destruction of agricultural land and the means of production.

Climate Change

The global food system accounts for a third of global greenhouse gas emissions. While it currently produces enough calories for the world's population, too much food is wasted and it is failing to deliver affordable, healthy diets. Land use changes, livestock production and the overuse of fertiliser and pesticides in prevailing agricultural practices contaminate water, degrade soils and contribute to climate change.

The impact of climate change is disrupting agriculture in many ways. Unpredictable weather patterns are making it more difficult for farmers to plan their season and increasing their risk. Climate change and environmental degradation are also reducing the viability of agricultural land, soil health and the nutritional quality of crops.

The EAT-Lancet's Planetary Health Diet, the World Bank's Recipe for a Livable Planet and other major reports are contributing to a growing awareness of the health impacts and carbon footprint of what we eat, how it is grown and transported to our plates and our health outcomes. In recent years, there has also been a recognition of the importance of resilient local and regional food systems especially in times of shocks and crises. This has also led to a greater focus on smallholder farmers and their organisations/ cooperatives, with recent initiatives such as the World Bank's AgriConnect focused on improving their productivity through capacity building and access to finance, technologies and markets.

Innovation

Modern agricultural technologies are crucial for addressing global food security and environmental sustainability challenges amidst a growing population and the climate crisis.

These innovations, and agricultural breakthroughs are transforming the way food is grown, tracked and delivered to the consumer.

Farmers now have opportunities and access to smarter tools and these capabilities reduce waste, lower costs and create space for producers to experiment with climate resilient practices that focus on building healthy soils, biodiversity and long-term resilience rather than short term yields.

Demographics and consumer pressure

Population growth, rising incomes in emerging economies, an aging rural population as young people move to urban areas for jobs, and changing consumer preferences are also driving change in food systems. Urban food consumers are increasingly opting for convenience, and in some contexts a desire for a frictionless experience is also changing the food landscape. In LMICs, as incomes increase, dietary trends are shifting more towards animal-sourced foods and ultra processed foods that are more resource intensive; meanwhile, indigenous ingredients that are often nutrient-dense and climate-resilient are being forgotten. In high income countries, households that can afford it are shifting to a more sustainable, healthier diet.

The food environment, or “the physical economic, socio-cultural and policy context” in which food choices are made, including marketing, accessibility, cost, and quality, has a significant impact on consumer behaviour.

Power dynamics

The 21st century global food system has been shaped by corporate concentration across the value chain and inequities in access to land, financing, information and technology driven policies at global and national levels. These power imbalances have also influenced global governance on SDG2 and the functioning of the financing architecture.

For example, important progress has been made globally in promoting and protecting breastfeeding. At the same time, in many contexts there are still strong commercial pressures and marketing practices that undermine or discourage breastfeeding in favour of formula, despite the well-established importance of breastfeeding for women’s and child health, nutrition, immunity, and long-term development.

This reflects a broader challenge where food environments and consumer choices are not shaped purely by individual decisions and budgets,

but also by powerful economic incentives, aggressive marketing, corporate dynamics and the growing availability of ultra/highly processed foods that are often cheaper and more accessible than healthy alternatives that influence diets from early childhood onward.

Geopolitical Reset

Multipolar world, weaker multilateralism

Over the last decade, we have seen a slow breakdown of the prevailing global order. Nationalism, domestic economic concerns and migration have contributed to eroding support for a more globalised world view. This has been characterized by a shift away from a US-dominant unipolar world to an unstructured multi-polar world that is not neatly organised along regionally, economically or politically aligned coalitions.

While the G7, the G20 and the UN Security Council still function as spaces for discussion—they are no longer the only fora for coordinated responses to some of the world’s greatest challenges, including pandemics; war and peace; and economic, climate and food shocks. Their scope is narrowing to ‘core issues’ of economics and stability. The Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, which was established under the Brazilian G20 Presidency, is an exception.

Multilateralism has been weakened and undermined by the breakdown of the global order, challenging the UN system in fundamental ways, including in its consensus-based decision making, its moral voice, and its normative and implementing roles.

Broken trust as national interest trumps solidarity and global cooperation

The global response to COVID-19 served to further undermine trust between developing and developed countries due to the uneven vaccine rollout, the economic impact of the global lockdown and the supply chain disruptions. It also brought into stark focus a growing crisis of information integrity. The spread of misinformation and disinformation on highly profitable and powerful social media platforms are contributing to an alarming rise in hate and science denialism. This is playing out in ways that complicate and even jeopardize progress towards SDG2.

The immediate impact on food, fertiliser and energy prices as a result of further supply chain disruptions caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the NATO countries' sanctions and restrictions on Russia was felt in higher cost of living all over the world but acutely in developing countries. Among NATO countries, a greater focus on national security and defence spending has come at the expense of investments in ODA, including for food security.

Global markets are adjusting and responding to uncertain and ever changing US trade policies and conditions. Tariffs and protectionism have compounded the impact of supply shocks that affect energy, food and fertiliser prices, hitting LMIC exports, raising input prices and contributing to foreign exchange fluctuations.

These shifts have a few implications for advocacy on SDG2: a breakdown in the sense of solidarity and collective action in the face of rising hunger and malnutrition in other parts of the world. Impending famine no longer constitutes a moral red line that compels joint political action at the highest level and the mobilisation of sufficient resources. Political leadership often stops at rhetoric while any real action is fragmented and lacking in scale.

A focus on sovereignty and regional or issue-based coalitions

With the breakdown in global cooperation, there has been a marked rhetorical shift towards self-sufficiency and sovereignty. The pandemic and the complex geopolitical conflicts that have followed since then have only served to reinforce the need to reduce dependence on the international system and community, and other parts of the world for politically sensitive and fundamental things such as food and energy security and health.

This has been articulated by African leaders and in policies such as the **Kampala Declaration (CAADP 2026-35)** and the African Continent Free Trade Area.

This was also very much at the heart of the Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's groundbreaking speech at the World Economic Forum earlier this year, where he made the case for a new approach for middle power countries that still believe in rules-based order and multilateralism to align and work together in new ways—based on mutual interest:

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Over the past two decades, a series of crises in finance, health, energy and geopolitics have laid bare the risks of extreme global integration. But more recently, great powers have begun using economic integration as weapons, tariffs as leverage, financial infrastructure as coercion, supply chains as vulnerabilities to be exploited...The multilateral institutions on which the middle powers have relied – the WTO, the UN, the COP – the architecture, the very architecture of collective problem solving are under threat.

And as a result, many countries are drawing the same conclusions that they must develop greater strategic autonomy, in energy, food, critical minerals, in finance and supply chains. And this impulse is understandable. A country that can't feed itself, fuel itself or defend itself, has few options. When the rules no longer protect you, you must protect yourself. But let's be clear eyed about where this leads. A world of fortresses will be poorer, more fragile and less sustainable. To help solve global problems, we're pursuing variable geometry, in other words, different coalitions for different issues based on common values and interests....It's building coalitions that work – issues by issue, with partners who share enough common ground to act together.

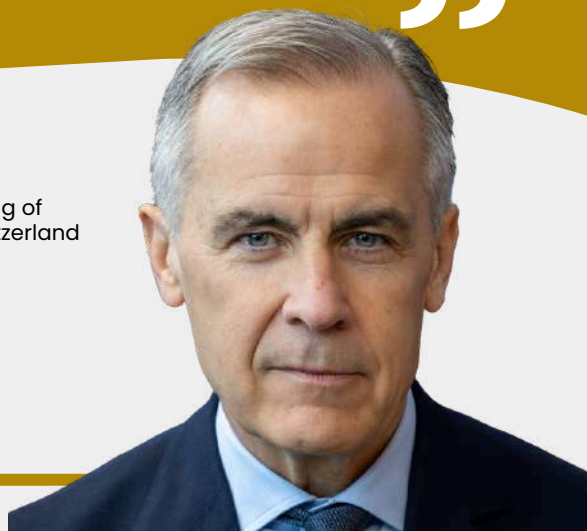
”

Mark Carney

Prime Minister of Canada

Speech made at the 2026 annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney at the Deux-Montagnes station for the REM branch opening in Montreal
©Lea-Kim



In the SDG2 space, 28 diverse coalitions have emerged from the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, including the Zero Hunger Coalition and the School Meals Coalition, and the Alliance of Champions for Food Systems Transformation which was launched at COP28. These are examples of new ways of working across aligned stakeholders towards specific objectives but they also raise questions about the hidden costs of coordination across so many initiatives and of capacity being spread too thin.

Financing Shock

The first two decades of this century were marked by the evolving role of ODA as a result of the end of the Cold War and a period of marked peace, the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals and the 2007/2008 global food and financial crisis. ODA grew and was increasingly seen as critical to filling gaps that LMICS faced that would not be filled by the private sector. ODA was justified to the public and legislators as essential for the delivery of global public goods—health, education, smallholder agriculture, institutional capacity, and some infrastructure investments. It was also seen as a tool in the national security toolbox, the third leg of a stool alongside diplomacy and defence spending that leveraged donor government's soft power across the globe. During this period, there was a growing focus on aid effectiveness.

The Paris Declaration underscored the importance of country-led, country driven approaches and the need to harmonise and align aid with national priorities. The adoption of the SDGs took this further, with a goal 17 on partnerships and means of implementation and a deepening understanding of the need for systemic changes and systems approaches and leadership. The post-COVID reality is very different and how ODA will evolve is still unclear. According to the OECD and reported by the Guardian, ODA peaked at \$223 billion in 2023. In 2024, prior to the Trump Administration's closure of USAID, eight countries cut their development assistance by \$17.2 billion. As a result, the international community and countries that have depended on ODA are facing difficult choices at a time when financing needs are growing in light of unprecedented challenges and in order to harness the momentum brought by important political commitment, strategies built on better evidence and experience and new innovations and technologies.

Painful ODA cuts

According to the OECD, ***donors reduced ODA by 9% in 2024 and a projected 9-17% in 2025*** and ***28% in 2026***. The hardest hit sectors include health and humanitarian assistance. The Lancet estimates that a severe defunding scenario could ***result in 22.6 million additional deaths*** by 2030. The Least Developed Countries and countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are also disproportionately affected by these cuts. ODA for food security, nutrition and agriculture was devastated by the dismantling of USAID. An ***analysis by the European Commission*** notes: "The US is the world's largest ODA donor; in 2024, it contributed to 25% of total ODA. Food security was the sector with the highest funding, with over \$4.6 bn. The sector of agriculture has experienced the highest cut in absolute terms and an 81% reduction...The nutrition sector will be cut by at least 39%."

The humanitarian system has also been badly affected. ***Donors are no longer meeting even 50 percent of the annual estimated need***. This was inevitable given the rising humanitarian need since 2015 due to conflict, and climate and economic shocks, and the doubling of the annual humanitarian appeal after 2019 (from approximately USD 25 billion in 2019 to around USD 50 billion each year since then) due to the impacts of the pandemic and the Ukraine war.

In addition, the ***system depended on three donors*** that accounted for 62% of humanitarian funding in 2023, with the US being the largest contributor, especially for food security and nutrition. Humanitarian actors are having to make difficult choices, focusing limited resources on the most acute cases to save lives while having to cut back on assistance to populations facing emerging emergencies / deteriorating conditions and for measures that would prevent populations from reaching that stage. This sadly will perpetuate the cycle of growing need at ever greater costs – financial, economic and human.

In its "reset" to adjust to a significant reduction in ODA, the ***UK*** has increased its contribution for humanitarian assistance while funding for long-term development has been cut and capped for multilateral institutions. It has an increased focus on fragile and conflict affected states (FCAS) but the majority of funding goes to four conflict affected contexts, while funding for Africa was reduced. ***Germany*** is now the largest donor country for ODA and has prioritised funding for food security and nutrition and transforming food systems, especially in Africa.

Shifting priorities

The emphasis on “localisation,” including local leadership and strengthened national systems, has led to some reforms but remains an unfinished agenda that may now be at risk. In response to the more recent geopolitical shifts and slashed budgets, ODA is once again becoming more transactional. Bilateral aid is becoming more overtly political and self-interested, focused on expanding trade and investment opportunities.

The decline in ODA has also contributed to further risk aversion among donors—with a narrower focus on specific interventions and projects that deliver short term results and a shift away from systems and capacity strengthening and investments that are important for localisation but have a longer runway to show tangible results or an immediate return on investment.

As donors re-evaluate how they can support their partner countries in this constrained environment, there is more discussion and emphasis on leveraging the private sector to crowd in investment. There is also a growing focus on what philanthropies can do to fill gaps, and many are stepping in. These are opportunities but each comes with challenges and will need to be part of a broader set of shifts and reforms to contribute in a meaningful way.

Unsustainable debt

These shifts in ODA come at a time when LMICs are facing unsustainable debt and many are experiencing debt distress, severely limiting their fiscal space and capacity to respond to emerging crises. In 2023, reaching levels not seen since the 1990s, the external debt owed by LMICs was \$8.8 trillion.

Debt servicing and interest payments significantly constrain public spending on health, education and other essential services critical to long-term economic growth and development. Debt relief has been high on the agenda for the G20 for several years, initially through the Debt Service Suspension Initiative in 2020/21, which provided temporary relief by pausing debt servicing, and then through the Common Framework for Debt Treatment to restructure debt.

The process has been complex because of the diversity of creditors and it has moved very slowly. To date, four countries have applied and only two countries have reached an agreement with their creditors. Rising oil prices due to the current Middle East crisis will further deepen the debt crisis in low-income countries that depend on oil imports.

System Fragmentation

Global governance and the international architecture built to achieve SDG2 is increasingly fragmented, under stress and in need of reform. ODA cuts have contributed to a funding crisis for the UN system. Budget cuts have been felt across the board and among the Rome-based agencies –FAO and WFP– and agencies that are directly relevant to advancing SDG2, including WHO and UNICEF. This has led to much reduced capacity, particularly in humanitarian response, as a result of job losses at headquarters and in the field.

While this is not a recent trend, the sector has become increasingly fragmented. This fragmentation dilutes the effectiveness and overall impact of the collective effort on SDG2, poses significant administrative and coordination challenges for national governments and undermines the effort to strengthen national systems. Over the years there have been attempts to address this through reforms and efforts to improve coordination, including through the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and most recently in 2024 through the G20's Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty (GAAHP) to align political leadership, knowledge sharing and financing around country-led approaches to strengthen national systems and to scale effective policies.

Several factors contribute to and reinforce fragmentation:

Earmarking and competition:

Donor earmarks and proliferation of competing initiatives have also contributed to fragmentation. As member state contributions and funding for the UN and its specialised agencies declined, funding from other stakeholders including bilateral donors, philanthropy and the private sector led to smaller, more discrete projects and initiatives, reflecting and driven by the interests of the funders.

While this has supported and advanced work in key areas, it has also led to greater competition for funding, reduced incentives to coordinate and collaborate, and to align behind country-owned and led priorities, and less funding for systems strengthening and capacity building.

“Mission creep” + duplication:

ODA cuts have also exacerbated the not so new challenge of shifting mandates within agencies as a result of more complex challenges, frequent crises and increased competition for fewer resources. Agencies are scrambling to fundraise, sometimes pitting one against the other and leading to mission creep as they bend to donor interests and earmarks.

According to the Center for Global Development, there are 4 drivers of overlapping mandates:

“Firstly, new and evolving crises are triggering programmatic shifts. For example, climate change has caused multiple agencies to move beyond their original mandates, delivering programming for disaster response and protection for the increasing numbers of climate displaced.

Secondly, the increasing numbers of people in need in complex and protracted crises are blurring the lines between humanitarian and development programming and mandates.

Thirdly, institutional incentives to maintain strategic relevance foster innovation and expansion.

Finally, many of these overlaps can be attributed to donor behaviour and financing. UN agencies are, in effect, incentivised to go beyond their mandate and deliver additional programs in order to receive further funding. Donors have increasingly “earmarked” multilateral contributions, tying them to specific crises, agencies, geographies, or programs (by comparison, only 13 percent of funding is unearmarked).”

Last year on the 80th anniversary of the United Nations, the UN launched a wide-ranging reform process called the UN80 Initiative to address internal efficiencies, mandates and structural changes in the context of declining resources. The success of this exercise will depend on member states and the reliability of its financing.

Vertical funds

A large amount of funding continues to flow through vertical funds that focus on specific challenges or issues. Because of this clear focus and on a fundraising model based on replenishment summits, vertical funds are relatively successful in mobilising resources.

At the country level, in the absence of strong coordinating mechanisms and capacity, vertical funds tend to work in relative siloes and further fragment the resources available to support national development plans and systems. SDG2 is inherently multisectoral and does not lend itself to vertical financing models that have worked so well in the global health space, including GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance and the Global Fund Against AIDS, TB and Malaria. around food emergencies and there is more public support for humanitarian assistance budgets, which also makes it more challenging to raise resources that would support transformative change.

Reduced civic space and civil society capacity

The broader geopolitical shifts and ODA cuts have also had a devastating impact on civil society organisations at international, regional and national levels.

As philanthropies have stepped in to fill gaps created by ODA cuts, the traditional sources of funding for civil society have shrunk, leading to staff reductions and a focus on core activities, leaving reduced capacity to work in policy and advocacy spaces. Furthermore, after decades of opening civic space and inviting civil society to the decision-making table, civic space is now shrinking. Civil society organisations no longer have the influence they once had and issues related to participation, human rights, democracy and rights-based approaches do not have the salience they once had. This has significant implications for advocacy and accountability on SDG2.

Erosion of Public Support for International Development

The public is losing faith in institutions and governments to deliver change. The cost of living crisis has exacerbated tensions as spending on development assistance is pitched against domestic services and investments. This zero sum narrative needs to be countered with a case to be made on the benefits for investment in resilience and systems that show impact and mutual benefits. While philanthropies are not governed by accountability to taxpayers, they are still driven to some extent by public perceptions and energy and need to have the public's backing or a social license for legitimacy, trust, and for the deep collaboration across stakeholders that is needed for systems change.



Fresh vegetable produce in the market
© Pexels/Tawseef Ahmad

Emerging and Hopeful Signs and Opportunities

Despite the relatively gloomy global context, there are hopeful signs and important opportunities at national, regional and global levels to make progress on SDG2. Over the next four years, these should be nurtured, supported and leveraged.

Country & Regional Leadership

Political Prioritization

In 2025, the African Union with the Kampala Declaration adopted its updated SDG2 and food systems transformation strategy: the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) 2026–2035. This has contributed new energy and momentum at the national level as countries are aligning their national plans around this new framework. The final biennial review of the 2nd CAADP Strategy shows that while there has been a lot of progress, significant challenges and headwinds remain, including those created by the geopolitical, financing and architectural challenges discussed earlier. Countries are beginning to look at alternative models of financing, including blended finance, and there is a renewed focus on creating the right enabling environment.

The implementation of CAADP presents an important opportunity to engage in the discussion, share best practices and evidence, and ensure that this momentum leads to a step change in progress in the region.

It is an opportunity to accelerate food systems transformation and to double down and layer investments in rural areas where food insecurity and malnutrition remain endemic. Advocacy and technical support could help build investment cases, funding-ready projects, integrate nutrition and climate into the design of projects, engage farmer, youth and women-led organisations.

At the 2025 Paris Nutrition for Growth Summit, 61 non-donor countries made political and financial commitments. The majority are low and middle income countries and members of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. With the adoption of the SUN Movement's 4th strategy (SUN 4.0), there is greater emphasis on strengthening country leadership and capacity, integrating nutrition across sectors and securing sustainable financing for nutrition.

Food System Champions and Bright Spots

Brazil, France, Ireland, Norway and Spain have emerged as champions for SDG2. In 2024, President Lula put hunger and poverty at the top of the G20 agenda, leading to the establishment of the GAAHP. Brazil's COP30 Presidency expanded the visibility of food systems as a climate challenge and solution.

Brazil and Norway have joined Cambodia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone in the Alliance of Champions for Food Systems Transformation. Ireland has used its seat on the UN Security Council to focus attention on acute hunger and malnutrition, especially in the context of conflict. Later this year, Ireland takes the presidency of the European Union and could advance SDG2 and food systems transformation priorities. Ireland and Spain increased their contributions to IDA, the World Bank's concessional window for low-income countries during the 21st replenishment cycle. In addition, Spain co-chairs the GAAHP along with Brazil and continues to support GAFSP. France hosted a successful Nutrition for Growth Summit that garnered more than USD 30.5 billion in nutrition commitments in the midst of widespread ODA cuts and has mobilised a mainstreaming of nutrition throughout its government priorities.

New Financing Mix

The 2025 Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) held in Sevilla last year came at a critical time as the international community was taking on board the substantial cuts in ODA and the shifting priorities discussed above. The Outcome Document, adopted by consensus, called out the \$4 trillion financing gap to achieve the SDGs and agreed to pathways to overhaul the current global development financing architecture and global economic governance, address the debt crisis, lower the cost of capital, improve fiscal space and "mobilize additional, innovative, adequate, affordable, predictable and accessible financing from all sources recognizing the comparative advantages of public and private finance." The financing gap to achieve SDG2 and food systems goals is estimated to be more than \$350 billion annually.

While ODA remains critically important, especially for low and lower middle income countries, especially fragile and conflicted affected states, the ODA crisis creates an opportunity for the SDG2 Advocacy Community to think more strategically about how to leverage ODA to unlock and catalyse financing from a diverse mix of public and private financing options.

In the lead up to FfD4, the [2024 SOFI Report](#) and a related [background paper](#), “Reorientation, innovation and the global architecture for financing for food security and nutrition” made some concrete proposals for financing for SDG2. These include:

Leveraging the Multilateral Development Banks/ International Financial Institutions

In the context of declining bilateral ODA and tightening fiscal space, the role of the international financial institutions, the multilateral development banks (MDBs) —the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the InterAmerican Development Bank, the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)— is increasingly important in the development space, as donor governments increasingly view these institutions as providing cost-effective mechanisms that [can be further leveraged](#) to deliver the financing needed to achieve development and sustainability goals.

These institutions are also knowledge brokers and provide strategic policy advice. To build more build resilient and sustainable food systems, they can scale up support to countries in designing integrated policies and programmes that optimise budget allocations in ways that deliver diverse and nutritious diets affordably; lift smallholder farmers and rural communities out of

hunger and poverty by expanding and strengthening shock-responsive social protection systems, improving access to agricultural inputs, innovation and finance, and creating rural jobs; and provide support for climate change adaptation. Taking a targeted and layered approach in rural areas in low and lower-middle income countries, where agriculture accounts for 20–30 percent of GDP, would accelerate progress on hunger and poverty, while contributing to equitable growth and climate and health goals.

Concessional Lending and Grants

In the last two years, despite constrained ODA budgets, donors met their previous levels of funding for the replenishments of the concessional lending windows of the World Bank and the African Development Bank, [IDA](#) and [ADF](#) respectively. While not meeting ambitious initial targets, the [IDA21](#) and [ADF17](#) replenishments exceeded expectations and brought in new donors, expanding the hybrid financing model. In the case of the ADF, 24 African countries pledged \$180 million, and 19 of them were first time contributors.

These windows provide grants and long-term loans at zero interest to low income countries. The majority of IDA financing goes to Africa. The policy commitments and priorities laid out in the IDA21 and ADF replenishments align with SDG2 and could be

harnessed more effectively to increase investments in agriculture, nutrition and food systems transformation.

The World Bank also hosts the GAFS, which is an innovative approach established by the G20 in 2010 to align donors and multilateral organisations to scale up funding for smallholder agriculture in low income countries but has never been funded at the levels originally envisaged, and the Global Financing Facility, which is a country-led partnership to improve health and nutrition outcomes. In 2025, the World Bank in partnership with IFAD and the regional development banks, launched AgriConnect to double investments in agribusiness, with a focus on smallholder farmers, rural jobs and global food security.

In 2025, the Asian Development Bank announced a sizable \$26 billion expansion of its investment in food security and nutrition for a total of \$40 billion by 2030. “Through financing and policy support for governments and companies, the program aims to help Asia and the Pacific generate diverse and nutritious food, create jobs, reduce environmental impacts, and promote resilient agricultural supply chains.”

In February, IFAD launched its 14th Replenishment cycle. IFAD’s dedicated focus is on rural areas and smallholder farmers. The themes for IFAD14 are deeper market integration, rural employment and resilience to shocks.

Additionally, there are growing calls to reform the MDBs in ways that extend their balance sheets, mobilise private financing and streamline processes to speed up disbursement.

Increased Lending Capacity

In 2021, in an effort to identify ways in which IFIs’ balance sheets could more effectively be leveraged to deliver the financing needed to accelerate progress towards the SDGs and address the climate crisis, the G20 initiated a Capital Adequacy Framework Review that has led to some reforms. By 2024, these reforms are estimated to have created more than \$170 billion in additional lending capacity and are expected to yield additional lending capacity of \$300-400 billion over the next 10 years.

In 2025, Standard and Poor’s revised its methodology and estimated that the MDBs could lend a further \$600-800 billion without affecting their triple A credit rating. This presents an important opportunity that will require making the case for and supporting countries to develop financing plans to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition, and transform food systems, especially in LMICs and fragile contexts.

Improved coordination

The G20 has also called on the MDBs to work better together as a system to improve their collective impact on the SDGs and climate action. This includes aligning their lending at country level around country platforms, harmonising procurement policies and practices, cofinancing, stepping up on climate finance, and catalysing private sector finance.

Blended finance/insurance and guarantees

The MDBs and concessional financing can be leveraged to attract private capital or more risk averse investors to raise the resources needed to improve food security and nutrition and to transform food systems. As the recent crises have shown, the agrifood sector is inherently risky as it depends on the right conditions—weather, markets, infrastructure, input supply etc. Donors, MDBs, governments, and other forms of patient capital can do more to absorb or take on some of the risk through first loss guarantees, insurance to bring in new investors and financing in exchange for delivering against specific food security objectives.

Special Drawing Rights

In response to the economic impacts of the COVID pandemic, the IMF issued the equivalent of \$650 billion in Special Drawing Rights (SDRs). Higher income countries have a higher SDR allocation than low income countries by virtue of the size of their economies.

As they were in a better fiscal position and able to withstand the shock, the G20 agreed to rechannel \$100 billion of SDRs to low-income, debt-distressed countries through two IMF trust funds: the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) and the Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST).

These trusts could be leveraged to advance food security goals and in 2024 the IMF board approved the rechanneling of SDRs to the AfDB and the InterAmerican Development Bank through a hybrid capital model to leverage additional lending capacity to finance development challenges, including food security and nutrition. There are proposals to use a similar hybrid capital mechanism to rechannel SDRs to IFAD. Despite these efforts, only a fraction of the rechanneled SDRs have been disbursed and progress in rechanneling to the regional development banks has stalled. Given the financing gap, much more could be done to unblock efforts to rechannel SDRs.

Debt

Over the last five years, debt service costs have increased by 91% leaving 32 countries in (or at high risk of) debt distress and US\$471.52 billion debt service costs in low- and middle-income countries in 2024.

In 2020, a Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) provided countries with fiscal space during the pandemic. Given the current Middle East Crisis and the forecasted El Niño, it may be time for a new DSSI and/or other initiatives to unlock fiscal space using IMF's instruments such as the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust, which provides immediate debt service relief grants for low income countries when there is a shock, and reopening the "Food Shock Window."

In 2022, the Bridgetown Initiative introduced the idea of debt pause clauses to address the additional fiscal strain that highly indebted countries face when hit with a climate or external shock. Debt pause clauses are pre-agreed terms to pause debt repayments when triggered by a specific event. They were put to the test for the first time in the Caribbean in 2024. While there are lessons learned from that experience, if more countries included debt pause clauses, they could also provide valuable fiscal space to respond to a crisis.

Climate finance

Given the contribution and impact of climate change on food systems, it is startling that agriculture receives just over seven percent of climate finance, while smallholder farmers receive less than one percent to adapt, despite being on the front lines of the crisis.

Although there are no rigorous estimates of how much climate finance should flow directly to smallholder farmers, the estimated funding gap is \$75 billion based on back of the envelope calculations that take into account how much food is produced by smallholders. The Green Climate Fund offers an opportunity to scale up financing to build resilience, transform food systems transformation and manage climate shocks, including through its Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme that can build national capacity to integrate agrifood systems and nutrition in NDCs and National Adaptation Plans. Like most MDB financing, GCF project approval times are long but recent reforms aim to reduce it to 9 months, this would be a substantial improvement from the more than 2 years it has been taking.

Mobilising Domestic Resources and Repurposing Subsidies

The most sustainable and resilient financing for food security, nutrition and food systems transformation comes from domestic resources and in government budgets. Targets to mobilise a total of \$100 billion in public and private sector investment in African agri-food systems by 2035 have been established.

This is alongside a commitment by African countries to continue investing at least 10% of their annual public expenditure in agrifood systems and reinvest 15% of agrifood GDP annually back into the sector. Governments can do more to raise revenue through smart tax policy, including income and corporate taxes, value added taxes, sin taxes and taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages, and curbing tax evasion and illicit financial flows.

The World Bank's analysis suggests a tax to GDP ratio of at least 15% to provide enough revenue to improve social and economic outcomes. The tax to GDP ratio in Africa is 16.1% relative to 33.9 percent in OECD countries. In addition, how that revenue is deployed could have a big impact on food security and nutrition outcomes. Strong public financial management systems and capacity support good budgetary decision making and accountability.

The fiscal constraints low income countries are under, make it all the more important that domestic resources are used most effectively. The World Bank and IFPRI analysed the more than \$650 billion the world spends on agricultural subsidies. They found that agricultural supports lead to inefficiencies and incentives that encourage unsustainable and harmful production and consumption practices.

Their 2022 modelling estimates that "redirecting about \$70 billion a year, equivalent to 1% of global agricultural output, would improve economic efficiency and result in net gains to the global economy of about \$2.4 trillion in 2040." In a 2025 report, the World Bank compiles case studies showcasing reform and concludes that "much of today's support still encourages inefficient use of resources, distorts markets, and contributes to environmental damage, climate pressures, and poor nutrition outcomes. For every dollar spent on agricultural subsidies, the world sees only 35 cents of added output."

In addition to repurposing harmful subsidies, government procurement can be an important tool in using domestic resources to achieve nutrition, health, education and sustainability outcomes simultaneously.

Proven Solutions Exist

We don't lack solutions—we lack scale and alignment. In 2026, there is a lot that we know. As discussed in [A Global Plan to End Food Crises and Transform Food Systems](#), we have technical solutions, evidence-based interventions, and tested policies. We also have guidance and guidelines that have been developed at the normative agencies of the UN agencies, including WHO and FAO, through the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition and deliberations at the Committee on World Food Security, and the Food Systems Summit. In times of multiple overlapping crises, however, there is a risk that short term solutions are prioritised over the systemic, integrated approaches that lead to lasting and transformational change.

The [GAAHP's Policy Basket](#) is the core tool to support knowledge-sharing for country-led large-scale implementation of evidence-based policy instruments and programmes. It provides a menu of rigorously evaluated policy instruments and programmes, which can be adapted to specific national or subnational contexts. Policies in the Policy Basket draw on extensive implementation experience and research over decades, including the following:

Smallholder Agriculture:

In 2020, the research collaborative [Ceres2030](#), using machine learning to analyse decades of research and evidence, identified 10 interventions to end hunger and improve smallholder farmers' livelihoods by 2030. They are:

- **Empower the Excluded**
 - Enable participation in farmers' organisations.
 - Invest in vocational programmes for rural youth that offer integrated training in multiple skills.
 - Scale up social protection programmes.
- **Invest on the Farm**
 - Invest in extension services, particularly for women, must accompany research and development (R&D) programmes.
 - Ensure agricultural interventions to support sustainable practices are economically viable for farmers, including soil health and biofertilisers.
 - Support adoption of climate-resilient crops.
 - Increase research on water-scarce regions to scale up effective farm-level interventions to assist small-scale producers.
 - Improve the quantity and quality of livestock feed, especially for small and medium-scale commercial farms.

- **Help Move Food to Markets & Consumers**

- Reduce post-harvest losses by expanding the focus of interventions beyond the storage of cereals to include more links in the value chain and more food crops.
- Invest in the infrastructure, regulations, services and technical assistance needed to support SMEs in the value chain.

“

Our current global food system is uneven, fragile and fueling the climate crisis. The climate and food crises are intricately linked, and leaders must do much more to address both now.

There is no doubt that smallholder farmers are the backbone of the food system. Without us, the food system would not survive. As farmers, we must adapt to sustainable food production approaches, new technologies... and ensure we are as resilient as possible.

We need our governments to commit almost triple of what they are currently committing to Agriculture.

”



Elisabeth Nsimdala

President, East African Farmers Federation

Nutrition:

Several Lancet Maternal and Child Nutrition Series have taken stock of the proven, cost effective, nutrition specific interventions have been found to be proven and cost effective:

- Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation for pregnant women
- Iron folate supplementation for adolescents and pre-pregnancy
- Promotion of Breastfeeding
- Appropriate complementary feeding including nutrient-rich foods and small-quantity lipid-based nutrient supplements.
- Vitamin A administration and preventive zinc supplementation in children aged 6–59 months
- Supplementary food in food-insecure settings
- Management of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) through ready to use therapeutic food (RUTF) and community-based approaches using locally sourced supplementary foods.
- Large-scale food fortification and biofortification
- Promotion of handwashing
- Strategies to prevent malaria during pregnancy
- Shifting and influencing diet choices (through nutrition education, social, and behaviour change communication (SBCC), labelling, etc.)
- Nutritious school meals
- Food vouchers and cash transfers

A new research project that builds on Ceres2030, Hesat2030, provides donors and governments in low-income countries with ten high-impact nutrition-sensitive interventions in the agrifood system to contribute to ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition:

- Diversification towards fruits, vegetables, and pulses, including agroforestry
- Sustainable aquaculture and livestock
- Home gardens
- Biofortification
- Storage, distribution, processing and trade infrastructure
- Large-scale food fortification
- Food safety
- Shifting and influencing diet choices (through nutrition education, social, and behaviour change communication (SBCC), labelling, etc.)
- Nutritious school meals
- Food vouchers and cash transfers

Large-scale food fortification appears frequently as an impactful, yet underutilised approach. New evidence in the Lancet underscores the cost-effectiveness and impact of large-scale food fortification on reducing micronutrient deficiencies. It is emerging as a critical tool to reach large swaths of the population. Current fortification programmes prevent 7 billion micronutrient inadequacies for about USD 0.18 per person per year across the five fortified foods. According to the authors, “(a)ligning with international guidelines and expanding programmes could triple their effects but cannot eliminate all inadequacies, underscoring the importance of complementary approaches to improve diet quality.”

Food Systems Transformation

Following the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021, there are growing efforts to operationalise and implement a just and inclusive food systems transformation that navigates synergies and trade-offs across people, planet and prosperity:

- FAO's 2023 Report launched at COP 28, Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold: A global roadmap, Part 1, outlines ten priority domains (livestock, fisheries and aquaculture, crops, enabling healthy diets for all, forests and wetlands, soil and water, food loss and waste, clean energy, inclusive policies and data) and 120 actions across the domains.
- The Food Systems Dashboard identifies 42 policies and actions to orient food systems to deliver healthier diets and a further 45 to ensure environmental sustainability, many of them with co-benefits.
- The Alliance of Champions for Food Systems Transformation has aligned around specific recommendations in 10 priority intervention areas: increase affordability, improve livelihoods, enhance resilience, advance gender parity, protect and restore nature, scale up sustainable management practices, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce food loss and waste, accelerate innovation, and realign public financial and policy incentives.

- The World Bank's Recipe for a Livable Planet provides a strategic framework and actionable recommendations for countries at all income levels to reduce the climate impact of agrifood systems while also improving the reliability of food supply, strengthening the global food system's resilience to climate change, and safeguarding vulnerable populations.

Climate Adaptation:

- There is growing consensus that incremental approaches are no longer sufficient. There is urgency to step up transformative approaches that protect and improve smallholder farmers' productivity and livelihoods, diversify crop production, anticipate and respond to the impact of climate change on nutrition, ensure water security, step up agriculture research, planning, and adaptation services, reform agricultural policies, and include affected communities in decision-making, including women and marginalised groups. These actions would deliver a "triple dividend" of preventing losses, economic benefits, and social and environmental gains.

Strengthening and Leveraging Existing Platforms

From nutritious school meals to cash transfers, **community level platforms can drive progress on multiple outcomes simultaneously while also building resilience to future shocks.** Despite their outsized impact, they are vastly under utilised: an estimated 2 billion people in low and middle-income countries are without sufficient social protection while only half of primary school students receive school meals.

Social Protection

- Social protection programmes, including cash transfers in humanitarian and fragile settings, have proven effective in protecting and improving food security, nutrition, and livelihoods. They can be scaled during crises and leveraged to promote gender equality and anticipatory actions. Adaptive social protection programmes help individuals and communities reduce the impact of climate shocks and build resilience to future shocks. They have also been found to foster greater social inclusion.
- Resilience is not just about coping with or surviving shocks, it is about building greater self reliance, including through long-term food systems transformation. While in some contexts, humanitarian and food assistance will remain essential, more can be done to leverage humanitarian assistance and social protection systems to create the conditions to strengthen livelihoods, local production, and local market development.

School Meals:

Most countries have some sort of school meals programme. While they vary in scope, scale, and targeting, they are very popular, serving an important education and food security function, and there is growing momentum with the launch of the School Meals Coalition at the UN Food Systems Summit. The benefits of school meals include keeping girls in school, especially adolescent girls, who face the risk of child marriage.

They also provide a platform that with the right design can be leveraged to improve nutrition outcomes, including through nutrient dense meals and take-home rations that can help younger siblings, and nutrition education that shapes lifelong eating habits including dietary diversity, to prevent overweight and obesity and, by extension, related non-communicable diseases. Procurement policies for school meals programmes can prioritise purchasing food from small-scale, local farmers, helping to improve their livelihoods and reduce rural poverty, and encourage sustainable and equitable approaches, including biodiversity preservation, natural resource conservation and indigenous production practices. This was done successfully in Brazil and Ghana.

Smallholder Farmer Organisations

According to Ceres2030, smallholder farmers who are members of farmer organisations and cooperatives are more resilient and have higher incomes. Farmers organisations offer an important platform to disseminate agriculture extension, nutrition education, new and contextualised research findings. They are an underutilised platform that could be used much more effectively and creatively.

Mechanisms Exist

In the next 4 years, we do not need any new initiatives at global, regional or national levels. We need to put more energy and effort in making the existing ones work better together to deliver for people and communities trying their level best under everchanging circumstances to escape hunger, poverty and the devastating impacts of malnutrition.

In the previous sections, many of these mechanisms have been discussed. To highlight just a few, since the 2007/2008 food price crisis and each subsequent crisis, the international community has responded by creating new initiatives to fill gaps and address underlying failures. In addition to GAFSP and the GAAHP, the G20 established AMIS – the Agricultural Market Information System to improve transparency and policy coordination in 2011; and the G7 established the Global Alliance for Food Security and the Global Food Security Dashboard to support the response to the food crisis fueled by the COVID-19 pandemic and Ukraine crisis, including through operationalisation of the Food Security Crisis Preparedness Plans.

In addition, the UN Food Systems Summit and its coalitions, and the Alliance of Champions are mechanisms for driving food systems transformation. IFAD and GAFSP are funding mechanisms dedicated to SDG2 and rural hunger and poverty.

The Child Nutrition Fund (CNF) and Global Financing Facility (GFF) are funding mechanisms that can be used to support and scale nutrition interventions. The Green Climate Fund and the RST can be further leveraged to support the transition to sustainable and healthy food systems. The Scaling Up Nutrition Movement provides critical architecture for coordinating the needed expertise and finance to scale up proven nutrition solutions and nutrition integration across national systems.

Due to this complex, fragmented, overlapping, and sometimes competing landscape, these initiatives and the contributions of the many organisations that have SDG2 relevant mandates are not being maximised and the collective impact is less than it should be. This contributes to donor fatigue. With ever increasing threats to global food security and nutrition due to the climate crisis, we can no longer afford a system that functions this way. With deeper coordination, streamlined roles and responsibilities, reliable funding and greater accountability, the whole ecosystem would deliver more than the sum of its individual parts. This requires strong and sustained political leadership, a willingness to be coordinated and for donors to step back from earmarking but to provide long-term, flexible funding.

Moments that Matter

The next 18 months may offer some important global opportunities to address some of the challenges highlighted in this paper and over the next several months. It is critical for the SDG2 community to work together to leverage and influence these moments and processes to advance SDG2:

The Irish Presidency of the European Union (July - December 2026)

Ireland will assume the presidency from July-December 2026. Given their longstanding vocal leadership and commitment to ending hunger and malnutrition, this could be an important opportunity to mobilise a response to the multi-year food security crisis unfolding as a result of the war in the Middle East and lay the groundwork for the UK G20 and COP32 to make measurable progress on a resilience agenda through reform, financing and improved coordination.

The UK Presidencies of the G20 (2027) and G7 (2028)

The back-to-back G20 and G7 Presidencies of the United Kingdom create a two-year timeframe to leverage the country's leadership and expertise for SDG2. While the details are still being discussed and worked out, the UK Government has announced the focus of their leadership of the G20, commencing in December 2026, will be on growth and opportunity. In May of this year, the UK hosted the Global Partnerships Conference that could signal and shape the development agenda of its G20 presidency. Its Global Partnerships Compact lays out a recommitment to international cooperation in three areas: financing for sustainable development and resilience; knowledge, data, technology and innovation; and equitable diversified partnerships that deliver.

COP32 in Ethiopia (November 2027)

COP32 will be held in Addis Ababa, the first COP to be held in Sub-Saharan Africa. Addis is also host to the African Union. In advance of the last two Climate COPs, the African Union has held Africa Climate Summits to develop a common position. Aligned with CAADP, AU leaders have identified food security, nutrition, smallholder livelihoods and food systems transformation as key priorities for climate adaptation and climate finance. COP32 offers an opportunity to build on the COP30 Belém Declaration on Hunger and Poverty and the COP28 Leaders' Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action, to make concrete progress towards investments in resilient food systems that support healthy diets, rural and smallholder livelihoods, community resilience and biodiversity preservation.

SDG Summit (September 2027)

The SDG Summit takes place every two years in September at the UN General Assembly. The 2027 summit will be the last to meaningfully take stock and align ahead of the 2030 deadline. It will also be a key opportunity to influence the conversations about the post-2030 agenda. Is it time to think about a five year extension?

Upcoming Replenishments

In the next two years there will be several important opportunities to mobilise public financing for SDG2 and food systems transformation, including the replenishment cycles of IFAD14 in December 2026, IDA22, GAFSP and GCF-3 in 2027. Advocacy and engagement in the process, including the consultations for these replenishments can position food security, nutrition, agriculture and food systems transformation in broader development and climate financing fora, influence policy setting, results metrics and reforms, and support ambitious funding targets.



A Proposed Advocacy Framework

In light of these trends, opportunities and the short time frame left to 2030, now is not the time to abandon SDG2 but to take coordinated action to protect the gains made over the last three decades, to build resilience and to accelerate transformative investments. We have the mechanisms and the solutions.

SDG2 advocacy work over the next two years should focus on 4 pillars:

Pillar 1: Protect & Accelerate Progress

- Focus on policies that build resilience and prevent backsliding
 - Move quickly to prevent food crises from happening and to prevent countries or communities from slipping from IPC 3 to IPC 4 and 5 by implementing and operationalising Food Security Crisis Preparedness Plans in all fragile and conflict affected countries.
 - Prevent and treat wasting and acute malnutrition through a multisectoral approach, strengthening national health, social protection, WASH and food systems. Leverage the Child Nutrition Fund to address nutrition commodity bottlenecks and target available financing to overlooked areas.
 - Expand and strengthen social protection systems and other national systems to respond quickly to climate and other shocks and stresses.
- Focus on Africa as the region where hunger continues to rise and a strong continent-wide policy framework and national strategies exist.
- Invest in equitable transformative resilience in local and regional food systems.
- Increase access to affordable, diverse and nutritious diets.
- Diversify fertiliser supply: reduce dependence on just a few regions for fertilisers and their inputs; strengthen strategic regional reserves; and expand access and use of sustainable, non-synthetic fertilisers, including biofertilisers.
- To protect fiscal space, expand the use of debt pause clauses in case of climate and other natural disasters and in instances of major global disruptions such as pandemics and global food, fertiliser and energy price shocks.

Pillar 2: Shift to Systems, Not Silos

- To address the root causes of fragility and vulnerability, double down on and layer investments in rural areas where the majority of the world's poor and hungry live and produce 35 per cent of the world's food. This includes policy coherence and the convergence of programmes and investments in agriculture, infrastructure, health, education, social protection, and community-level capacity, including community health workers and extension workers.
- Integrate nutrition across sectors to leverage co-benefits and maximise the impact of investments in food security, agriculture, health, climate, and social protection policies and programmes, and to achieve multiple, complementary, and overlapping objectives.
- Strengthen data and analytical systems to measure implementation and impact of integrated and systems approaches.
- Champion innovative, evidence-based, scalable, integrated and win-win approaches, such as the Lancet Series maternal and child nutrition interventions, Hesat2030 recommendations and agricultural innovations, including AI and digital tools, and large-scale food fortification.
- Prepare an investment case for debt-financing for food systems transformation to encourage governments to draw down the financing being mobilised through the capital adequacy framework reforms of the MDBs for SDG2.

Pillar 3: Finance Differently

- Align financing with national priorities and plans (nutrition, food systems, climate and SDGs), amplify and leverage country leadership and financing coordination efforts, ensure citizen engagement and accountability, and strengthen domestic resource mobilisation and national public financial management capacities.
- Invest in more and better public financing for long-term, flexible and reliable financing.
- Reduce fragmentation through improved coordination and accountability across the SDG2 global financing architecture.

- Integrate development, humanitarian and climate financing to meet the multidimensional needs of countries with the highest burdens of food insecurity and malnutrition and to prevent short-term setbacks from shocks becoming long-term reversals of progress. This will require new ways of working and interoperable systems, in order to avoid additional and onerous requirements for countries. The GAAHP has proposed a "Ready, Set, Go" framework — pre-allocation of indicative finance, structured matchmaking around a country plan, then formalisation through existing channels. Where appropriate, consolidate efforts/ programmes/ organisations where mandates overlap. Use upcoming replenishments including IFAD, GAFSP, the Green Climate Fund and IDA22, to increase funding for integrated approaches in affordable healthy diets, resilient and sustainable food systems and rural livelihoods, and to strengthen national systems and capacity.
- Make better use of concessional financing, public subsidies and philanthropy to absorb risk, scale new approaches and technologies, invest in multi-sectoral/ integrated approaches, and to attract private capital.
- Support transparent global, regional and national financing data systems and accountability efforts to inform budgeting and policymaking, track results, and build investment cases.
- Advocate for a financing tracker for SDG2. Currently, there is no streamlined way to track how much financing is available and how it is being used.

Pillar 4: Deliver Leadership and Accountability

- Build and communicate a shared public narrative on the importance of investing in SDG2 and food systems transformation for the day-to-day concerns of people, including the cost of living, health, climate and jobs.
- Cultivate and elevate political and champion voices in both developing and donor-country contexts. Leadership, inspiration and success stories will be key to building momentum, scaling and shifting the narrative.
- Build on and strengthen existing political, financing coordination, delivery and accountability mechanisms.
- Track delivery and outcomes, not just commitments and pledges.
- Invest in citizen engagement: make the case for funding civil society to support capacity strengthening, consistent advocacy and accountability.



2 ZERO HUNGER

13 CLIMATE ACTION

What this Means for the SDG2 Advocacy Community

As discussed throughout this paper, the changed and evolving landscape and the shrinking time-frame for action means the approach to SDG2 advocacy must also change in a few significant ways:

1. Fewer, bigger priorities

Now more than ever, we must move away from fragmented and competing agendas. To build resilience at the country level, it is critical to support national governments to scale up the systems and the innovations that will safeguard gains in the face of shocks and that will accelerate progress on SDG2, including strengthening local and regional food systems, expanding social protection, diversifying diets and integrating nutrition across health and other sectors, and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

2. Shared narratives

The pandemic, cost of living crises, and conflicts closer to home have made the public in many donor countries more inward looking and sceptical about spending on “foreign aid.” ODA cuts and a sense of urgency to respond to multiple overlapping crises have contributed to a shift away from rights-based, consensus-building and systems-strengthening approaches and a focus on creating jobs domestically and leveraging ODA to mobilise the private sector to make up for the financing gap. Despite this wariness, recent polls show strong public support for effective solutions to addressing hunger and malnutrition.

In this context, SDG2 advocacy has to make a unified, strong, clear and compelling investment case to rebuild public will and gain public legitimacy in donor and developing countries. This means showing relevance to domestic priorities in the immediate and long term, including affordability, jobs – especially for youth – macroeconomic stability, and demonstrating cost-effectiveness and the win-wins across multiple development and climate objectives.

It is critical that we work together to develop a shared SDG2 narrative to support actions that save lives, build resilience and secure the future, and counter short-termism and a return to stop gap measures, projectised, and silver bullet solutions.

3. A Reform Agenda

As discussed earlier in this paper, we already have much of the knowledge, technical capacity, policies and platforms needed to significantly reduce hunger and malnutrition. The challenge therefore is not only technical or financial, but also political. It is important to reflect more explicitly on whether the current global food and financing architecture is sufficiently prepared to enable more equitable participation, strengthen local ownership, and support fairer and more resilient food systems and economic structures.

To address this and the longstanding concerns about fragmentation in the SDG2 space, the community must proactively propose a reform agenda. While this should not come at the expense of stepping up action to address the needs in communities and transforming food systems, it is important to go beyond recognising the problem to identifying solutions. ODA cuts have already led to harmful changes; we need to get ahead of further setbacks by proposing reforms that will lead to the systemic changes we would like to see. The UK G20 could build on the work started by the Brazil Presidency's Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty that is a step towards reducing fragmentation and efforts like the Kofi Annan Commission on Food Security's report, Reimagining Global Governance".

4. Champion Voices

To ensure messages are heard, remembered and acted on, it is essential to establish trust through credible messengers who understand what communities need and believe, what the public cares about, how issues are talked about in the media, and what leaders feel pressure to respond to. Additionally, we need leaders and messengers who are prepared to use their voice to challenge existing concentrations of economic and market power that continue to reproduce structural inequalities and vulnerabilities across food systems. From the SDG2 Advocacy Hub's experience working with food champions, these trusted practitioners and leaders across the food system use their influence, expertise and platforms to catalyse action. They model solutions, shift norms and inspire others to act. For example, neurosurgeons were the champions who spearheaded advocacy to pass the World Health Assembly Resolution on Large-scale Food Fortification because of their work on Spina Bifida and the importance of folic acid in preventing it.

Emerging Big Questions

- What does “aid effectiveness” look like in a post-ODA-dominant world and what does it mean for SDG2?
- How do we balance sovereignty with global coordination?
- What scalable bets and innovations can help drive change in smallholder agriculture from the ground up?
- How do we fund and build support for prevention, and not just crisis response?
- How do we build public and political support for ending hunger and malnutrition in the current geopolitical context?
- How do we rebuild legitimacy and shift real power to local and national actors in food systems?
- What reforms to the global SDG2 architecture will meaningfully support investments in climate resilient food, agriculture, and nutrition systems at scale? Which mechanisms exist and who will drive this conversation?
- How do we come together to put forward a financing proposal for food systems transformation to unlock debt financing, repurpose subsidies and increase public and private investment?
- What does a system truly focused on resilience, equity, and long-term outcomes look like—and what must donors, INGOs, and multilaterals stop and start doing to get there?
- How do we ensure that geopolitical competition does not eclipse urgent food and nutrition priorities?

The Way Forward

Phase 1 (6 months, July – December 2026)

- Align community around pillars
- Identify “big bets”
- Map champions

Phase 2 (6–18 months, January 2027 – June 2028)

- Drive coordinated advocacy
- Influence the UK G20, the UK G7 + COP32 agendas
- Build financing coalitions
- Position SDG2 as central to global agenda

Phase 3 (2028–2030)

- Deliver funding and accountability moments
- Track progress

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Fresh produce at market
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