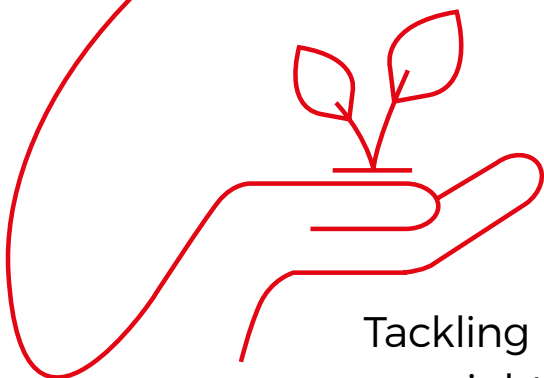


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— REALIZZA IL CAMBIAMENTO —



## **Nutrition at stake**

Tackling the nutrition crisis through women's rights, agroecology and the right to food

Author: **Alex Wijeratna**

Contributing ActionAid Staff: **Ruchi Tripathi, Sally Henderson, Celso Marcatto, Veronica Boggini, Roberto Sensi**

Revision: **Livia Zoli, Beatrice Costa**

Graphics: **Tadzio Malvezzi**

Supervision: **Luca De Fraia, Everjoice Win**

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Photocredit: **Ernanio Mandlate/KISAI/ActionAid, Clément Tardif/ActionAid, Teresa Anderson/ActionAid, Florian Lang/Actionaid**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This briefing sets out ActionAid's key priorities on nutrition and ensuring the right to adequate food and nutrition for all. Globally, one in three people are malnourished and if current trends continue, this number could reach one in two by 2030. Many poor countries now experience a "triple burden" of malnutrition, where hunger, "hidden hunger" micronutrient deficiencies, and overweight and obesity may all co-exist.

While we welcome the commitments made through the recent UN Decade of Action on Nutrition to 2025 and the ambitious global goal to end hunger and prevent all forms of malnutrition<sup>1</sup> by 2030 under the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and so called Agenda 2030, we believe it is vital that:

- » All efforts towards achieving global malnutrition goals and targets by 2030 are carried out, guided and monitored under the right to food and nutrition framework.
- » Governments ensure poor nutrition is tackled more

broadly through a major paradigm shift towards agroecology and rebuilding sustainable local food systems.

- » Governments put women's human rights, women's empowerment and women's rights to land and other resources at the heart of efforts to tackle nutrition.
- » Governments curb the market power and undue influence of agri-food transnational corporations (TNCs) and ensure powerful TNCs are much more tightly regulated at all levels to ensure the right to adequate food and tackle the malnutrition crisis.
- » Governments democratise food system governance at all levels, and work harder to ensure the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) remains the foremost oversight and monitoring body for all major global food and nutrition strategies and initiatives to 2030.

<sup>1</sup> The term malnutrition includes undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity





# INTRODUCTION

This briefing sets out ActionAid's key priorities on nutrition and ensuring the right to adequate food and nutrition for all. We set out the scale of the nutrition crisis, explore the main drivers behind it and lay out the key actions and approaches we believe Governments should take to tackle the issue. With so many malnourished and trends set to

worsen, we welcome the commitments made through the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition to 2025 and the ambitious global goal to end hunger and prevent all forms of malnutrition by 2030 under Agenda 2030. However, we set out four key recommendations that we think are vital for success.

## 1 - FRAMING THE ISSUE: ROOT CAUSES OF NUTRITION CRISIS AND THE RIGHT TO FOOD

### 1.1 - Nutrition crisis

The global nutrition crisis is chronic, urgent and is set to intensify. Globally, one in three people are malnourished<sup>2</sup> and, if current trends continue, this number could reach one in two by 2030<sup>3</sup>. The estimated number of hungry people recently jumped from 777 million to 815 million, while nearly a quarter of all children under five worldwide - 155 million - are stunted and 52 million children suffer from wasting - a life-threatening condition<sup>4</sup>. Indeed, hunger kills more than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, poor, monotonous and inadequate diets can

result in micronutrient deficiencies and widespread "hidden hunger". Over two billion people lack vital micronutrients, such as iron, zinc, iodine or vitamin A, which are essential for good health<sup>6</sup>. A third of women of reproductive age globally suffer from iron-deficient anaemia, for example, which puts the health and nutrition of many children at risk<sup>7</sup>.

At the same time, the number of people that experience overweight and obesity has jumped to 1.9 billion globally<sup>8</sup>. This figure is projected to increase to 3.3 billion by 2030, or a third of the projected global population<sup>9</sup>. High obesity rates heighten the risk of non-communicable

<sup>2</sup> Glopan (2016) *Food systems and diets: Facing the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition (Glopan): London, UK

<sup>3</sup> HLPE (2017) *Nutrition and food systems, A report by The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, September 2017*, HLPE: Rome, Italy

<sup>4</sup> FAO/IFAD/UNICEF/WFP/WHO (2017) *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2017, Building Resilience for peace and food security*, FAO: Rome, Italy

<sup>5</sup> Hilal Elver (2016) *The Challenges and Developments of the Right to Food in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Reflections of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food*, *UCLA Journal of International Law & Foreign Affairs*, Spring 2016, Vol.20 Issue 1, p1-43. 43p

<sup>6</sup> Glopan (2016) *Food systems and diets: Facing the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition (Glopan): London, UK

<sup>7</sup> FAO/IFAD/UNICEF/WFP/WHO (2017) *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2017, Building Resilience for peace and food security*, FAO: Rome, Italy

<sup>8</sup> HLPE (2017) *Nutrition and food systems, A report by The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, September 2017*, HLPE: Rome, Italy

<sup>9</sup> Glopan (2016) *Food systems and diets: Facing the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition (Glopan): London, UK

diseases, such as type II diabetes, coronary heart disease and gastrointestinal cancers<sup>10</sup>, and malnutrition now represents the number one risk factor in the global burden of disease<sup>11</sup>. Alarming, many poor countries now face a "triple burden" and multiple forms of malnutrition co-exist, with many experiencing simultaneously high rates of child undernutrition, anaemia among women, and adult obesity<sup>12</sup>.

## 1.2 - Global drivers

Besides widespread poverty, inequality and marginalization, there are a number of powerful global drivers compounding the nutrition crisis in poor countries, such as urbanization, the nutrition transition, environmental degradation and climate change.

### Urbanization

Urban populations are growing most rapidly in Asia and Africa and an estimated 66 percent of the global population will be urban by 2050<sup>13</sup>. Urban dwelling is associated with less undernutrition than rural populations but more diet-related obesity and chronic disease, as well as greater risks from food price volatility. The urban poor experience low-quality diets and food safety risks, but potentially have good access to fresh produce from more numerous local markets<sup>14</sup>.

### Nutrition transition

Rising incomes, urbanization, globalization of diets and lifestyle changes are also associated with major diet shifts - known as the "nutrition transition" - towards eating more nutrient-dense meat, oils and dairy products, but also towards more unhealthy ultra-processed foods and soft

drinks, which are often high in sugar, salt and saturated fat<sup>15</sup>.

### Environmental degradation

Another key driver is the degradation of the ecosystems, environment and natural resource base - such as soils, water and land - on which many industrial agriculture food systems rely on. Unsustainable practices associated with industrial agriculture are a large contributor to land degradation<sup>16</sup>, leading to soil erosion, pollution of watersheds, seasonal water scarcities and water-borne and insect vector-transmitted diseases - which can have a negative impact on agricultural yields, income, nutrition and health<sup>17</sup>. Industrial agricultural systems have also contributed significantly to the destruction of natural habitats and losses of wild biodiversity around the world<sup>18</sup>. Experts say biodiversity and agro-biodiversity are critical for food security, diets and nutrition, offering dietary diversity and different nutrient profiles, and improving nutrient intakes<sup>19</sup>.

### Climate change

Climate change is and will make it incredibly challenging to meet food security and nutrition needs, particularly in food-insecure areas. Shifts in weather patterns and alterations in temperature, precipitation and extreme weather events will impact crop and food production, as well as aquatic species and aquaculture production systems<sup>20</sup>. It is estimated there could be an additional 25 million stunted children by 2050 under a medium-high climate change scenario<sup>21</sup>, and reductions in global food availability (such as fruit, vegetables and red meat consumption) due to heat and water stress could be associated with 529,000 more deaths by then<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> De Schutter (2014) *Final Report: The Transformative potential of the right to food*, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, Human Rights Council, Twenty-fifth session, United Nations General Assembly, A/HRC/25/57, 24 January 2014

<sup>11</sup> Glopan (2016) *Food systems and diets: Facing the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition (Glopan): London, UK

<sup>12</sup> FAO/IFAD/UNICEF/WFP/WHO (2017) *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2017, Building Resilience for peace and food security*, FAO: Rome, Italy

<sup>13</sup> HLPE (2017) *Nutrition and Food Systems, A report by The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition*, HLPE: Rome, Italy

<sup>14</sup> Glopan (2016) *Food systems and diets: Facing the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition (Glopan): London, UK

<sup>15</sup> See: HLPE (2017) *Nutrition and Food Systems, A report by The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition*, HLPE: Rome; Glopan (2016) *Food systems and diets: Facing the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition (Glopan): London, UK

<sup>16</sup> IPES-Food (2016) *From Uniformity to Diversity, A paradigm shift from industrial agriculture to diversified agroecological systems*, International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food), June 2016

<sup>17</sup> HLPE (2017) *Nutrition and Food Systems, A report by The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition*, HLPE: Rome, Italy

<sup>18</sup> See: UNCCD (2017) *Global Land Outlook, First Edition*, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD): Bonn, Germany; IPES-Food (2016) *From Uniformity to Diversity, A paradigm shift from industrial agriculture to diversified agroecological systems*, International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food), June 2016

<sup>19</sup> HLPE (2017) *Nutrition and Food Systems, A report by The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition*, HLPE: Rome, Italy

<sup>20</sup> IPCC (2014) *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability, Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects, Working Group II Contribution to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, IPCC: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, US

<sup>21</sup> Phalkey RK et al (2015) *Systematic review of current efforts to quantify impacts of climate change on undernutrition*, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America (PNAS) Vol.112, no. 33, E4522-E4529, August 18, 2015

<sup>22</sup> Springmann M, et al (2016) *Global and regional health effects of future food production under climate change: a modelling study*, *The Lancet*, 387(10031): 1937-1946

## 1.3 - Right to food

ActionAid believes in the centrality of human rights and in particular of adopting the right to food and nutrition framework as key to tackling the nutrition crisis successfully.

Indeed, countries such as Brazil that have successfully adopted a legally based right to food framework have managed significantly to reduce hunger and malnutrition in a highly inclusive, participatory and accountable way<sup>23</sup>.

Recognized under international law as a fundamental human right, the right to food is the right of every individual to have physical and economic access at all times to sufficient, adequate and culturally acceptable food that is produced and consumed sustainably, preserving access to food for future generations<sup>24</sup>. Individuals can secure sustainable year-round access to food by earning incomes, through social transfers, or by producing their own food - for those with access to land and other productive resources<sup>25</sup>. Through these channels, which often operate concurrently, each person should have access to a diet that:

*“... as a whole contains a mix of nutrients for physical and mental growth, development and maintenance, and physical activity that are in compliance with human physiological needs at all stages through the life cycle and according to gender and occupation”<sup>26</sup>.*

The core content of the right to food are requirements of availability, accessibility, adequacy and sustainability, all of which should be built into legal entitlements and secured through accountability mechanisms<sup>27</sup>. The right to food places three forms of domestic obligations on States: *respect, protect and fulfill*<sup>28</sup>.

### » **Respect**

States must not take any measures that result in preventing access to adequate food.

### » **Protect**

States must ensure that enterprises or individuals do not deprive other individuals of their access to adequate food. States should ensure food in the market is safe and nutritious and protect people, especially children, from advertisements for unhealthy foods.

### » **Fulfill**

States must pro-actively engage in activities intended to strengthen people's access to and utilization of resources and means to ensure their livelihood, including food security.

The right to food framework underlines the importance of political will, empowerment and participation of civil society, accountability and the monitoring of progress in the implementation of multi-year strategies. The framework is based on the human rights principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, human dignity, empowerment and the rule of law<sup>29</sup>.

## 1.4 - Other human rights

Calorie intake alone says very little about nutritional status. Healthy nutrition throughout the life cycle depends on ensuring a host of other key human rights, such as the right to water, health and education, plus rights to work and social security. Ensuring women's rights and equality for women and girls is also crucial<sup>30</sup>, as well as adequate feeding practices for infants.

As such, the right to food framework advocates comprehensive multi-sectoral national strategies to ensure progress on multiple fronts. Such interdependent strategies - co-derived and monitored by civil society in a participatory way - should deliberately focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized. This includes groups such as women, the rural landless, agricultural workers, indigenous peoples, slum dwellers and small-scale food producers, including 2.5 billion people involved in full or part-time

<sup>23</sup> FAO (2014) *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2014*, FAO: Rome; Italy; IFPRI (2014) *Global Nutrition Report 2014, Actions and Accountability To Accelerate The World's Progress on Nutrition*, IFPRI: Washington DC, US; De Schutter (2009) *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food*, Olivier De Schutter, Mission to Brazil, United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council, Thirteenth session, 19 February 2009, A/HRC/13/33/Add.6

<sup>24</sup> De Schutter (2014) *Final Report: The Transformative potential of the right to food*, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, Human Rights Council, Twenty-fifth session, United Nations General Assembly, A/HRC/25/57, 24 January 2014

<sup>25</sup> De Schutter (2014) *Final Report: The Transformative potential of the right to food*, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, Human Rights Council, Twenty-fifth session, United Nations General Assembly, A/HRC/25/57, 24 January 2014

<sup>26</sup> Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) (1999), *CESCR General Comment No.12: The Right to Adequate Food (Art.11)*, paras 6 and 7, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR): Adopted at the Twentieth Session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, on 12 May 1999, E/C.12/1999/5

<sup>27</sup> De Schutter (2014) *Final Report: The Transformative potential of the right to food*, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, Human Rights Council, Twenty-fifth session, United Nations General Assembly, A/HRC/25/57, 24 January 2014

<sup>28</sup> Hilal Elver (2016) *The Challenges and Developments of the Right to Food in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Reflections of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food*, UCLA Journal of International Law & Foreign Affairs, Spring 2016, Vol.20 Issue 1, p1-43. 43p; De Schutter (2012) *From Charity to Entitlement, Implementing the right to food in Southern and Eastern Africa*, Briefing Note 05, June 2012, Olivier De Schutter, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food

<sup>29</sup> De Schutter (2012) *From Charity to Entitlement, Implementing the right to food in Southern and Eastern Africa*, Briefing Note 05, June 2012, Olivier De Schutter, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food

<sup>30</sup> De Schutter (2014) *Final Report: The Transformative potential of the right to food*, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, Human Rights Council, Twenty-fifth session, United Nations General Assembly, A/HRC/25/57, 24 January 2014 - IFPRI (2016) *Global Nutrition Report, From Promise to Impact, Ending Malnutrition by 2030*, IFPRI: Washington DC, US

small-scale farming<sup>31</sup>, plus herders, pastoralists, forest dwellers and artisanal fisherfolk. These extremely poor and excluded communities are hungry and malnourished not because there is too little food available; they are malnourished because they are marginalized economically and powerless politically.

## 1.5 - Broken food system

Alongside poverty, deprivation and marginalization, one of the great structural causes of malnutrition is the broken food system. Comprehensive global assessments and panels of experts have recently highlighted overwhelming evidence in favor of a major transformation of our food systems. Influential studies have revealed the perilous condition of "long-chain" industrial food systems; from large-scale degradation of ecosystems and agricultural biodiversity and dangerously high greenhouse gas (GHG) levels, to the precariousness of plantation workers' and small food producers' livelihoods<sup>32</sup>.

While record numbers of people go hungry and malnourished, roughly a third of all food produced in the world for human consumption is lost or wasted each year under the current food system (in poor countries, heavy post-harvest losses are largely due to a lack of transport, storage and market facilities)<sup>33</sup>.

This deeply interconnected and mutually reinforcing agribusiness-driven and export-orientated global food system is shaped to maximize efficiency gains and produce large volumes of a monoculture-based range of commodities.

However, experts such as the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier De Schutter, highlight that this industrial food system has failed to take distributional concerns into account and has concentrated benefits in the hands of large production units and large landholders at the expenses of small-scale producers and landless workers<sup>34</sup>. Other experts conclude global food systems are not delivering healthy diets<sup>35</sup>.

## 1.6 - Sustainable food systems for better nutrition

ActionAid advocates a sustainable food systems-approach to ensure greater access to diverse food and healthy diets for poor communities in response to these challenges and seeks a shift towards wellbeing, resilience and sustainability of production and consumption. This means ensuring all parts of local food systems work together to deliver high-quality diets on a sustainable basis - from smallholder production, through processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food. Food systems and dietary patterns are key determinants of nutrition and health<sup>36</sup>. Good nutrition - especially from conception and the first 1,000 days through a child's first two years of life - is crucial because it allows infants to reach their full physical and cognitive potential. High quality diets eliminate hunger, are safe, promote health and reduce all forms of malnutrition<sup>37</sup>.

## 1.7 - Food sovereignty

ActionAid supports social movements' concept of food sovereignty and approach to food and nutrition, which is simply defined as "*the right of peoples and sovereign States to democratically determine their own agricultural and food policies*" and which involves "*transforming the current food system to ensure that those who produce food have equitable access to, and control over land, water, seeds, fisheries and agricultural biodiversity*"<sup>38</sup>. In contrast to increasingly corporate-controlled systems and corporate-driven plant breeding, food sovereignty devolves more responsibility, participation and decision-making power to farmers, indigenous peoples, food workers, consumers and citizens and places an emphasis on accountability and democratizing food and nutrition policies at village, municipal, national, regional and international levels - through a rights-based approach and an emphasis on the right to food and nutrition framework<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> IFAD (2011) *Rural Poverty Report 2011, New realities, new challenges: new opportunities for tomorrow's generation*, IFAD: Rome, Italy

<sup>32</sup> See: IPES-Food (2017) *Unravelling the Food-Health Nexus, Addressing Practices, Political Economy, and Power Relations to Build Healthier Food Systems*, IPES-Food, October 2017; IPES-FOOD (2016) *From Uniformity to Diversity, A paradigm shift from industrial agriculture to diversified agroecological systems*, International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-FOOD), June 2016; IAASTD (2009) *Agriculture at a Crossroads, Global Report*, International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD): Washington DC, US

<sup>33</sup> FAO (2011) *Global Food Losses and Food Waste, Extent, Causes and Prevention*, FAO: Rome, Italy

<sup>34</sup> De Schutter (2014) *Final Report: The Transformative potential of the right to food, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter*, Human Rights Council, Twenty-fifth session, United Nations General Assembly, A/HRC/25/57, 24 January 2014

<sup>35</sup> Glopan (2016) *Food systems and diets: Facing the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition (Glopan): London, UK

<sup>36</sup> UNSCN (2017) *Sustainable diets for Healthy People and a Healthy Planet, Discussion Paper*, United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN): Rome, Italy

<sup>37</sup> Glopan (2016) *Food systems and diets: Facing the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition (Glopan): London, UK

<sup>38</sup> UK Food Group (2010) *Securing future food: towards ecological food provision*, UKFG: London, UK

<sup>39</sup> UK Food Group (2010) *Securing future food: towards ecological food provision*, UKFG: London, UK



## 1.8 - Urban-rural links

Going beyond the rural-urban divide, for example, the food sovereignty movement promotes improved nutrition and healthy diets by deliberately linking rural and urban areas through a "territorial approach" which strengthens ties and links a city's food system with surrounding rural areas and small-scale food producers. Based on food democracy and civil society participation, monitoring and accountability, municipalities such as Belo Horizonte in Brazil have successfully linked urban consumers with rural small-scale producers through municipal procurement of food for public schools, day care centres and a network of low-cost traditional Brazilian "Popular Restaurants", as well as promoting urban agriculture, school gardens, alternative low-cost food markets and schemes where associations of rural small-scale producers sell directly to urban consumers<sup>40</sup>. Another interesting example of municipal leadership is the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, an international pact that aims to increase the sustainability and social justice of urban food systems and which is now endorsed by 159 cities worldwide<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> See: IPES-Food (2017) *What Makes Urban Food Policy Happen? Insights from five case studies*, International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food), June 2017; Hilal Elver (2016) *The Challenges and Developments of the Right to Food in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Reflections of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food*, UCLA Journal of International Law & Foreign Affairs, Spring 2016, Vol.20 Issue 1, p1-43. 43p

<sup>41</sup> For Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, see: [www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org](http://www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org)

### BOX1 GOLDEN RICE, SILVER BULLET?

Some institutions promote a narrow top-down "product-based" crop biofortification approach - such as the prospect of vitamin A-enhanced transgenic rice, or also known as "Golden Rice" - as silver bullet solutions to specific "hidden hunger" micronutrient deficiencies - in this case widespread vitamin A deficiency (VAD) amongst children. However, after over 17 years of research at the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines - and firm opposition from global peasants' network La Via Campesina and other civil society organizations (CSOs) - "Golden Rice" has yet to be successfully embedded into local Filipino rice varieties, or proved safe, or even useful against VAD. Overall, the high-profile technology is considered by respected academics to have "*functioned more as a public relations project than anything else*"<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> Stone D S & Glover D (2016) *Disembedding grain: Golden Rice, the Green Revolution, and heirloom seeds in the Philippines*, Agriculture and Human Values, Journal of the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society, DOI 10.1007/s10460-016-9696-1, 16 April 2016



## 2 - KEY ACTIONS FOR TACKLING MALNUTRITION

In order to promote sustainability and resilience and ensure the right to adequate food and nutrition for all, ActionAid believes Governments should:

### 2.1 - Promote agroecology and rebuild local food systems to ensure healthy diets

Governments should support a major paradigm shift towards agroecology and help rebuild sustainable local food systems to promote diverse food and healthy diets for poor, vulnerable and marginalized communities.

A science, a practice, and a way of life, agroecology is the application of ecological concepts and principles to the sustainable management of agricultural ecosystems, and its practices are based on enhancing the habitat - both above ground and in the soil. It refers to a combination of traditional knowledge and science to design and implement site specific alternatives that may involve intercropping, integrated pest or nutrient management, agroforestry, conservation tillage, aquaculture, water harvesting in dry land areas and livestock integration onto small farms - with an aim to reduce the use of external inputs, maximize resource efficiency and increase nutritional diversity<sup>42</sup>. Agroecology builds the health and resilience of ecosystems, while reducing reliance on external inputs such as chemical pesticides, industrial fertilizers and fossil fuels. It is based on the principles of building life in soils, recycling nutrients, the dynamic management of biodiversity, and energy conservation at all scales.

The great advantage of low-cost and low-external input agroecology is that it is highly inclusive, recognizes values and builds on the existing traditional knowledge and skills of women, small-scale farmers and other food producers and providers. Closely intersecting with food sovereignty as a grassroots social movement, agroecology emphasizes social participation and social empowerment,

and encourages peer-to-peer horizontal learning through initiatives such as the Farmer-to-Farmer Knowledge Exchange in Latin America, participatory plant breeding, farmer field schools, joint diagnosis, locally led initiatives and social monitoring of territorial markets and national food and nutrition strategies.

Experts say diverse field evidence is promising enough to suggest that in Africa applying agroecology farming methods focused on diversity, mixed farming and participatory plant breeding could more than double food production over three to ten years<sup>43</sup>. The former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier De Schutter, suggests scaling up agroecology could simultaneously increase farm productivity and food security, improve incomes and rural livelihoods, and reverse the trend towards species loss and genetic erosion<sup>44</sup>.

### Diverse agriculture, diverse diets

There is growing evidence to suggest that such low-input diversified farming can facilitate diverse diets among producer households without relying on the intermediary of international trade. Some of the evidence suggests that agricultural diversity does translate into dietary diversity at the farm household level and beyond<sup>45</sup>. Agricultural diversity has been linked to increased consumption of a range of key nutritional elements often missing in monotonous diets based around staple cereal crops. The consumption of legumes, fruits and vegetables in Malawi, for example, was found to be strongly associated with greater farm diversity<sup>46</sup>.

Going further, an eight-country study published in 2015 has emerging evidence showing that diversity in household agricultural production has direct and important linkages with dietary diversity and nutrition<sup>47</sup>. In Zambia, the encouragement of smallholder production diversity away from the monotonous local staple crop of maize - such as introducing field crops, vegetables, small animals and

<sup>42</sup> Oxfam-Solidarity (2014) *Scaling-Up Agroecological Approaches: What, Why and How? Discussion Paper, January 2014*, Oxfam-Solidarity: Nivelles, Belgium; De Schutter (2010) *Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter*, United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council Sixteenth Session, 18 December 2010, A/HRC/16/49

<sup>43</sup> Pretty J et al (2011) *Sustainable intensification in African agriculture*, *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability*, 9:1, 5-24, 8 June 2011

<sup>44</sup> De Schutter (2010) *Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter*, United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council Sixteenth Session, 17 December 2010, A/HRC/16/49

<sup>45</sup> IPES-Food (2016) *From Uniformity to Diversity, A paradigm shift from industrial agriculture to diversified agroecological systems*, International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food), June 2016

<sup>46</sup> Jones A D et al (2014) *Farm production diversity is associated with greater household dietary diversity in Malawi: Findings from nationally representative data*, *Food Policy* 46, 1-12. Doi:10.1016/j.foodpol.2014.02.001

<sup>47</sup> Carletto G et al (2015) *Farm-Level Pathways to Improved Nutritional Status: Introduction to the Special Issue, The Journal of Development Studies*, 51:8, 945-957

their produce - resulted in the consumption of a more nutrient-rich diverse diet and a reduction in stunting for children aged 24-59 months. Similarly, the introduction of cow ownership among poor farmers in Ethiopia saw infant intake of nutrient-rich dairy products improve and an associated reduction in child stunting<sup>48</sup>.

In some cases, improved health outcomes have been achieved in relation to diversified food production<sup>49</sup>. A recent study of iron and nutrient-rich homestead garden food production in Burkina Faso found positive effects of low-input diversified farming on child nutrition in terms of wasting, diarrhea and anemia, especially among the youngest children<sup>50</sup>. Meanwhile, CSOs in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal and the Philippines have promoted homestead gardening, small livestock rearing and nutrition education, on the basis that homes with homestead gardens were less likely to suffer from anemia and night blindness, linked to vitamin A deficiency<sup>51</sup>.

## Urban agriculture

Agroecology also increases access to more diverse and healthy food and diets for poor communities in urban and peri-urban settings. Aquaculture in small tanks, ponds or small plots in peri-urban settings have become popular in Nigeria, for example, while elsewhere vacant and under-used land in urban areas has been transformed into community gardens, micro-gardens, home gardens, institutional gardens, nurseries, roof-top gardens and cultivation barns and cellars<sup>52</sup>. Cuba leads the way in urban agriculture. It has an estimated 383,000 urban

<sup>48</sup> Carletto G et al (2015) *Farm-Level Pathways to Improved Nutritional Status: Introduction to the Special Issue, The Journal of Development Studies*, 51:8, 945-957

<sup>49</sup> Olney DK et al (2015) *A 2-Year Integrated Agriculture and Nutrition and Health Behavior Change Communication Program Targeted to Women in Burkina Faso Reduces Anemia, Wasting, and Diarrhea in Children 3-12.9 Months of Age at Baseline: A Cluster-Randomized Controlled Trial*, *The Journal of Nutrition, Community and International Nutrition*, vol.145, no. 6, 1317-1324, June 1, 2015, doi: 10.3945/jn.114.203539

<sup>50</sup> Olney DK et al (2015) *A 2-Year Integrated Agriculture and Nutrition and Health Behavior Change Communication Program Targeted to Women in Burkina Faso Reduces Anemia, Wasting, and Diarrhea in Children 3-12.9 Months of Age at Baseline: A Cluster-Randomized Controlled Trial*, *The Journal of Nutrition, Community and International Nutrition*, vol.145, no. 6, 1317-1324, June 1, 2015, doi: 10.3945/jn.114.203539

<sup>51</sup> Talukder A et al (2014) *Contribution of Homestead Food Production to Improved Household Food Security and Nutrition Status - Lessons from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal and the Philippines*, in *Improving Diets and Nutrition, Food-Based Approaches*, ed Thompson B and Amoroso L, FAO: Rome, Italy

<sup>52</sup> Oxfam-Solidarity (2014) *Scaling-Up Agroecological Approaches: What, Why and How? Discussion Paper, January 2014*, Oxfam-Solidarity: Nivelles, Belgium

## BOX2

### ACTIONAID SUPPORT FOR NUTRITION GARDENS IN INDIA<sup>a</sup>

ActionAid promotes agroecology for improved nutrition through support for homestead gardens in a host of countries including Kenya, Pakistan, India and Uganda. In India, we support the local grassroots Gene Campaign who set up a network of homestead "Nutrition Gardens" in the Uttarakhand region in the Himalaya foothills in northern India.

In an area known for high levels of stunting, wasting and anemia - due to poor diets, which were often lacking in vegetables - the Gene Campaign worked with poor women to establish homestead "Nutrition Gardens" in over 100 villages in the Kumaon division to ensure a diversity of nutrient-rich vegetables and fruit throughout the year. Training on nutrition and healthy diets was provided to women and adolescent girls and homestead production of nutrient-rich, wild and semi-domesticated traditional plants and cereals like nettles, ferns and *bathua* was revived.

Small farmer-led demonstration gardens and village-level stock planting nurseries were established, as well as farmer-run traditional variety seed banks, plus training in water harvesting, organic-based soil fertility improvement, and other agroecology techniques such as applying the principles of the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) to local millet varieties. With training in processing and food preservation, year-round access to traditional green leafy vegetables like buckwheat greens, *methi*, *bichu*, *chua* or *bathua* has increased, as well as to spinach, peas, eggplant, fava beans, pumpkin and sweet potato. ActionAid and the Gene Campaign report women's empowerment improved through the establishment of local women's groups and that incomes rose through the sale of food surpluses through these collectives on local markets.

<sup>a</sup> ActionAid India (undated) *Change in Stills, Home Garden & Food Security in Kumaon, A 'Gene Campaign' Initiative*, ActionAid Association: New Delhi, India

farms covering 50,000 hectares of previously unused land that produce over 1.5 million tons of fresh vegetables using low-input agroecological methods - enough to supply 40-60 percent or more of all the fresh vegetables in cities such as Havana, Villa Clara and others, and using a model of agriculture that reduces energy use, food miles and external inputs, and effectively closes local production and consumption cycles<sup>53</sup>.

## Climate resilience

Agroecology also improves resilience to climate change<sup>54</sup>. Small-scale farmers often live in marginal land where climate change is predicted to have a significant impact; 60 percent of the food consumed globally comes from smallholder agriculture in developing countries where crop diversity is key for the resilience of farming systems. A growing number of studies show that diversification-based models are enabling farmers to build resilience and remain productive in the face of more extreme weather-related events and climate shocks<sup>55</sup>. Furthermore, diversity of species and of farm activities encouraged under agroecology also mitigates against the invasion of new pests, weeds and diseases that result from global warming<sup>56</sup>.

Finally, agroecology also puts agriculture on the path of sustainability by delinking food production from the reliance on fossil fuel energy - such as oil and gas. Industrialized global food systems generate roughly a third of all human-caused GHGs<sup>57</sup>. Agroecology mitigates climate change by increasing carbon sinks in soil organic matter and above-ground biomass, and minimizes and avoids GHG emissions by reducing direct and indirect energy use.

## 2.2 - Promote women's empowerment and women's rights to land

Governments should put women's human rights, women's empowerment and women's rights to land and other resources at the heart of their efforts to ensure the right to adequate food and nutrition for all.

Women's empowerment has a key and hugely important

role to play for women and girls nutritional security. Although a range of human rights instruments directly involve women's rights - such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) - discrimination and violence against women and girls remain pervasive in all spheres of life. Women and girls face many constraints and inequities, often embedded in customary rules, norms and practices, and encoded in legal provisions.

In terms of nutrition, women and girls are affected in two main ways. One is the constraint on their access to education and employment opportunities, which reduces their economic autonomy and weakens their bargaining power within the family. This weakened position leads to little or no voice in household decisions, differential caregiving and feeding practices favoring boys and men, food and nutrition insecurity, and lower health and nutrition outcomes<sup>58</sup>. Second, the discrimination they face exposes women to material deprivation, and makes it more difficult for women to fulfill their vital roles in food production, preparation, processing, distribution and marketing activities. As a result of discrimination, women face<sup>59</sup>:

- » Unequal access to productive resources such as land and economic opportunities
- » Unequal access to decent wage employment
- » Unequal bargaining power within the household
- » Gendered division of labour within households - resulting in time poverty and lower levels of education
- » Marginalization from decision-making spheres at all levels - including the household, local communities and national parliaments.

ActionAid believes that removing these interrelated constraints and violations - by promoting women's empowerment and ensuring women's rights - and unleashing women's untapped potential is an enormously important component in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. Women currently provide 90 percent of the food consumed by the rural poor<sup>60</sup>, and FAO says that if women had the same access to productive resources

<sup>53</sup> Altieri A & Toledo V M (2011) *The agroecological revolution in Latin America: rescuing nature, ensuring food sovereignty and empowering peasants*, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 38-3, 587-612

<sup>54</sup> De Schutter (2010) *Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food*, Olivier De Schutter, United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council Sixteenth Session, 17 December 2010, A/HRC/16/49

<sup>55</sup> IPES-Food (2016) *From Uniformity to Diversity, A paradigm shift from industrial agriculture to diversified agroecological systems*, International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food), June 2016

<sup>56</sup> De Schutter (2010) *Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food*, Olivier De Schutter, United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council Sixteenth Session, 17 December 2010, A/HRC/16/49

<sup>57</sup> Thornton P K (2012) *Recalibrating Food Production in the Developing World: Global Warming Will Change More Than Just The Climate*, CCAFS Policy Brief No. 06, CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CAAFS): Frederiksberg, Denmark

<sup>58</sup> ADB/FAO (2013) *Gender Equality and Food Security, Women's Empowerment as a Tool against Hunger*, Asian Development Bank/FAO: Manila, Philippines

<sup>59</sup> De Schutter (2012) *Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food*, Olivier De Schutter, *Women's rights and the right to food*, United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council, Twenty-second session, 24 December 2012, A/HRC/22/50

<sup>60</sup> IFAD (2011) *Rural Poverty Report 2011*, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD): Rome, Italy



as men, “they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30 percent. This could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5-4 percent, which could in turn reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12-17 percent”, or by as much as 100-150 million people<sup>61</sup>.

## Women’s right to land

In particular, ActionAid puts an emphasis on the importance of women’s rights to productive resources - with secure access to land and land rights key for women’s empowerment. Women face multiple forms of discrimination in owning, controlling and accessing land - an economic asset, but also a means of empowerment, as the greater economic independence that results from land ownership, control or access to natural resources enhances a woman’s role in decision-making and allows women to gain greater independence and more family, social and community support.

## Land grabbing and land rights

Besides seeking to eliminate discrimination against women’s rights to land under statutory law and challenging the power of customary norms and laws - which can also greatly discriminate against women, such as through marriage, property or inheritance laws - women face another serious threat to their rights to land by foreign investment in large-scale land deals by transnational corporations (TNCs) and other agri-food businesses. Some 42 million hectares of land has been acquired in developing countries by TNCs and foreign and domestic investors since 2000<sup>62</sup>, and many of these large-scale land grabs have occurred on seemingly idle, vacant, or unused land - which many rural women rely on as an important source for food and nutrition security. Rural women have highly insecure land rights and are particularly hit hard by land grabs. Women often lose out on access to food, water, seeds, fodder, firewood, medicinal plants and agro-biodiversity as land, forests and water resources under customary and informal tenure are fenced off and acquired by investors<sup>63</sup>. Women’s and other insecure land rights should be recognized and land grabbing can be prevented through fully implementing the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests<sup>64</sup> (VGGTs).

## BOX3 ACTIONAID SUPPORT FOR WOMEN’S LAND RIGHTS IN INDIA, GUATEMALA AND SIERRA LEONE

ActionAid’s experience from working with poor rural women in India, Guatemala and Sierra Leone to secure women’s land rights found that these excluded women were greatly empowered by securing their land rights. Their successful struggle for women’s land rights improved their dignity, living standards and household food and nutrition security, and they reported improved personal, social, economic and political empowerment, especially through participation in various political processes<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> ActionAid (2013) *From Marginalisation to empowerment: The potential of land rights to contribute to gender equality - observations from Guatemala, India and Sierra Leone*, ActionAid International: Johannesburg, South Africa

## Seed saving

Women’s traditional knowledge of seed varieties and their roles as seed savers, and wider farmers’ rights to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed are under threat in many poor countries, where corporate-driven seed laws and restrictive intellectual property rights (IPR) rules and regulations are clamping down on - and in some cases criminalizing - peasant seed systems<sup>65</sup>. The vast majority of peasants and small-scale farmers, particularly women, still rely on traditional and informal peasant seed systems to access seeds that are highly adapted to their local culture and environment<sup>66</sup>. Women’s traditional

<sup>61</sup> FAO (2011) *The State of Food and Agriculture, Women in Agriculture, Closing the gender gap for development*, FAO: Rome, Italy

<sup>62</sup> See: UNCCD (2017) *Global Land Outlook, First Edition*, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD): Bonn, Germany Cotula L (2014) *Addressing the Human Rights Impacts of ‘Land Grabbing’*, Directorate-General For External Policies of the Union, Policy Department, report for European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights, September 2014, EXPO/B/DROI/2014/06, EU: Brussels, Belgium

<sup>63</sup> See: Oxfam (2013) *Promises, Power and Poverty, Corporate land deals and rural women in Africa*, Oxfam Briefing Paper 170, Oxfam: Oxford, UK: ActionAid (2012) *From Under Their Feet, A think piece on the gender dimensions of land grabs in Africa*, ActionAid International: Johannesburg; IFPRI (2011) *The Gender Implications of Large-Scale Land Deals*, IFPRI Discussion Paper 01056, IFPRI: Washington DC, US

<sup>64</sup> FAO (2012) *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*, FAO: Rome, Italy

<sup>65</sup> Monsalve Suarez S et al (2016) *Seeds and Agricultural Biodiversity: The Neglected Backbone of the Right to Food and Nutrition*, in *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch, Keeping Seeds in Peoples’ Hands, 2016/Issue 08*, FIAN: Heidelberg, Germany

<sup>66</sup> Monsalve Suarez S et al (2016) *Seeds and Agricultural Biodiversity: The Neglected Backbone of the Right to Food and Nutrition*, in *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch, Keeping Seeds in Peoples’ Hands, 2016/Issue 08*, FIAN: Heidelberg, Germany

knowledge and key role as custodians of seeds, plants and agro-biodiversity - including extensive knowledge of their nutritional value - is being eroded and marginalized; very much in violation of states' obligations to preserve and enhance such peasant seed systems under the right to adequate food<sup>67</sup>. ActionAid believes patents on crops and plants and restrictive IPR rules should be overturned and banned and instead Governments should adopt legal frameworks that recognize farmers' traditional knowledge and their roles preserving seed varieties, as well as protect wider farmers' rights to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed.

## Widespread discrimination

Women also face widespread discrimination in accessing finance and local markets, as well as gender-responsive rural extension services and agricultural research and development - all areas that can have a profound impact on healthy diets and year-round access to diverse and nutritious food<sup>68</sup>. At the same time, many landless rural women are drawn in as waged agricultural workers on industrial agribusiness farms and plantations. Gender-based discrimination means that women are disproportionately represented and segmented in the non-permanent "periphery" part of the workforce, picking up more lower-paid seasonal, casual, temporary, unskilled, contract-less and piece rate work. Abuses of farmworkers are magnified for women workers, from violence, harassment and sexual abuse, to unsafe pesticides exposure and failure to receive the minimum wage. Child-care services are often non-existent and pregnant and lactating women are invariably refused work<sup>69</sup>.

Governments should work alongside women's and small food producer groups to tackle, challenge and monitor such high levels of discrimination against women through multi-sectoral, carefully coordinated and comprehensive women's rights, right to food and nutrition-based national strategies. Exploring ways to relieve the excessive "burden of care" currently placed on women by society and gender stereotypes - such as caring for children and the elderly, food preparation, paid work, and unpaid domestic work - should be a key priority for such strategies.

## 2.3 - Regulate agri-food transnational corporations

ActionAid believes the market power and undue influence of agri-food TNCs should be curbed and that these excessively powerful TNCs should be more tightly regulated at the national, regional and global levels to ensure the right to adequate food and to tackle the malnutrition crisis.

Extremely powerful agri-food and chemical TNCs significantly influence food and nutrition laws and policy-making processes at both the national and international level<sup>70</sup>. In poor countries, this can profoundly undermine the rights of women, peasants, indigenous people and smallholder communities through corporate-driven seed, foreign investment, forestry, mining, fisheries, international trade, pesticides and agricultural development laws, rules, policies and agreements.

Recent corporate-driven seed laws in Colombia and Tanzania, for example, restrict peasant practices and traditional seed management systems, and have impaired access to seed by criminalizing and declaring peasant seed saving and exchange as illegal<sup>71</sup>. This is alarming because seeds are an important agricultural input that affects food availability, accessibility, public health and biodiversity<sup>72</sup>. There is also evidence that industrial agri-food focused and export-led food and agriculture policies and practices entrench rural poverty, violate human rights, degrade land, forests, soils and the environment, lead to land grabbing and dispossession, contaminate and deplete water resources, harm the health of impoverished farm workers and local communities, and release high levels of GHGs<sup>73</sup>.

## Corporate power

With a recent round of mega-mergers of giant agri-food TNCs - such as Bayer's \$66 billion buyout of Monsanto, the \$130 billion merger of Dow and DuPont, and ChemChina's \$43 billion acquisition of Syngenta and its planned merger with Sinochem next year - the concentration of market power and monopoly power is reaching unprecedented levels. These deals alone will place as much as 70 percent of the agrochemical industry

<sup>67</sup> De Schutter (2009) *The Right to food, Seed policies and the right to food: enhancing agrobiodiversity and encouraging innovation*, United Nations General Assembly, Sixty-fourth session, 23 July 2009, A/64/170

<sup>68</sup> See: ADB/FAO (2013) *Gender Equality and Food Security, Women's Empowerment as a Tool against Hunger*, Asian Development Bank/FAO: Manila, Philippines; De Schutter (2012) *Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, Women's rights and the right to food*, United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council, Twenty-second session, 24 December 2012, A/HRC/22/50

<sup>69</sup> De Schutter (2012) *Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, Women's rights and the right to food*, United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council, Twenty-second session, 24 December 2012, A/HRC/22/50

<sup>70</sup> Hilal Elver (2016) *The Challenges and Developments of the Right to Food in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Reflections of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food*, UCLA Journal of International Law & Foreign Affairs, Spring 2016, Vol.20 Issue 1, p1-43. 43p

<sup>71</sup> Monsalve Suarez S et al (2016) *Seeds and Agricultural Biodiversity: The Neglected Backbone of the Right to Food and Nutrition*, in *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch, Keeping Seeds in Peoples' Hands*, 2016/Issue 08, FIAN: Heidelberg, Germany

<sup>72</sup> Hilal Elver (2016) *The Challenges and Developments of the Right to Food in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Reflections of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food*, UCLA Journal of International Law & Foreign Affairs, Spring 2016, Vol.20 Issue 1, p1-43. 3. 43p

<sup>73</sup> See: IPES-Food (2016) *From Uniformity to Diversity, A paradigm shift from industrial agriculture to diversified agroecological systems*, International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food), June 2016

in the hands of only three merged companies<sup>74</sup>.

On the consumer side, powerful food TNCs heavily promote consumption of unhealthy and excessively salty and fatty foods and sugary soft drinks, which continue to fuel the epidemic in overweight and obesity. Meanwhile baby food TNCs such as Nestlé and Danone continue to aggressively market breast-milk substitutes, due to weak implementation and patchy enforcement of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes into national legislation (only 72 out of 193 countries have fully enshrined the Code into legislation)<sup>75</sup>. World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines say exclusive breastfeeding is the optimal form of infant feeding up to the age of six months, with continued breastfeeding, combined with safe and adequate complementary foods, up to the age of two years old or beyond<sup>76</sup>. Yet globally, less than 40 percent of infants are exclusively breastfed for six months. Instead, many mothers practise mixed feeding (ie the provision of foods and liquids together with breast-milk) when their infants are in their first six months<sup>77</sup>.

In response to these threats, ActionAid supports a proposed UN Treaty to ensure TNCs and other business enterprises respect all human rights - including the right to food - as well as a new UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, which would further recognize and protect the rights of peasants and rural women and men to land, seeds and biological diversity, natural resources, traditional knowledge, the means of production, a decent income and food sovereignty<sup>78</sup>.

Furthermore, the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes should be fully implemented and fully enforced. Antitrust and competition law should be used to break up the monopoly power of global agri-food TNCs, while a collaborative assessment of agri-food consolidation and a proposed UN Treaty on Competition are required to deliver transnational oversight of these TNC mega-mergers<sup>79</sup>. Finally, punitive taxes on sugary soft drinks and junk food should be imposed and stringent conflict of interest rules enforced at all key policy making levels.

## 2.4 - Democratise food systems governance and ensure key global role for the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

Governments should democratise food system governance at all levels, and work harder to ensure the inclusive Committee on World Food Security (CFS) remains the foremost oversight and monitoring body for all major global food and nutrition strategies, plans and initiatives to tackle malnutrition by 2030.

The right to food and nutrition framework requires that multi-sectoral national strategies to ensure the right to food are governed at all levels in a much more inclusive, participatory and democratic way - and especially with participation of rights holders and representatives of those most affected by hunger and malnutrition.

Fully recognizing and adhering to the right to food framework at the global level - set out in key global guidelines such as the Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food, and in the CFS's "Global Strategic Framework for Food Security & Nutrition"<sup>80</sup> - requires that there should be full transparency, accountability and ongoing oversight and monitoring by rights holders of the overlapping plethora of global goals, targets, efforts and initiatives to end all forms of malnutrition by 2030. This includes the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, the World Health Assembly global nutrition targets and the SDGs - in particular SDG 2, on ending hunger and malnutrition - as well as less well-monitored and scrutinized initiatives, such as the G7's Nutrition for Growth initiative and the Scale Up Nutrition (SUN) movement. We believe the inclusive CFS is the foremost, designated and best global venue for ongoing rights holder monitoring of global strategies, plans and initiatives to tackle malnutrition by 2030. Periodic reviews to track implementation should be presented - and made publicly available - at the UN General Assembly.

<sup>74</sup> IPES- Food (2017) *Too Big to Feed, Exploring the impacts of mega-mergers, consolidation and concentration of power in the agri-food sector*, IPES-Food, October 2017

<sup>75</sup> IBFAN-ICDC (2017) *Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules, 2017, Evidence of violations of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent resolutions complied from June 2014 to June 2017*, International Baby Food Action Network - International Code Documentation Centre (IBFAN-ICDC): Penang, Malaysia

<sup>76</sup> WHO (2013) *WHO recommendations on Postnatal care of the mother and newborn, October 2013*, WHO: Geneva, Switzerland

<sup>77</sup> HLPE (2017) *Nutrition and food systems, A report by The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, September 2017*, HLPE: Rome, Italy

<sup>78</sup> LVC/FIAN (2017) *Towards a United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, Policy Brief, September 2017*, La Via Campesina (LVC)/FIAN

<sup>79</sup> IPES- Food (2017) *Too Big to Feed, Exploring the impacts of mega-mergers, consolidation and concentration of power in the agri-food sector*, IPES-Food, October 2017

<sup>80</sup> For Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, see: [www.fao.org/3/a-y7937e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-y7937e.pdf); for the CFS's Global Strategic Framework for Food Security & Nutrition (GSF), see: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mr173e.pdf>

## 3 - RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to promote sustainability and resilience and to ensure the right to food and nutrition for all, ActionAid believes it is vital that:

- » All efforts towards achieving global malnutrition goals and targets by 2030 are carried out, guided and monitored under the right to food and nutrition framework.
- » Governments ensure poor nutrition is tackled more broadly through a major paradigm shift towards agroecology and rebuilding sustainable local food systems.
- » Governments put women's human rights, women's empowerment and women's rights to land and other resources at the heart of efforts to tackle nutrition.
- » Governments curb the market power and undue influence of agri-food TNCs and ensure powerful TNCs are much more tightly regulated at all levels to ensure the right to adequate food and tackle the malnutrition crisis.
- » Governments democratise food system governance at all levels, and work harder to ensure the inclusive Committee on World Food Security (CFS) remains the foremost oversight and monitoring body for all major global food and nutrition strategies and initiatives to 2030.











# act!onaid

— REALIZZA IL CAMBIAMENTO —

Via Alserio, 22  
20159 - Milano  
Tel. +39 02 742001  
Fax +39 02 29537373

Via Tevere, 20  
00198 - Roma  
Tel. +39 06 45200510  
Fax 06 5780485

Codice Fiscale  
09686720153

**[informazioni@ActionAid.org](mailto:informazioni@ActionAid.org)**

**[www.ActionAid.it](http://www.ActionAid.it)**

