DISCUSSION PAPER:
SDG/Post-2015 Goals on Food Security and Nutrition, and Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems

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This paper reflects the views of Alliance Sud, Berne Declaration, Biovision – Foundation for ecological Development, Bread for all, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, HEKS, Millennium Institute and Swissaid.

SUMMARY

This paper may serve as a basis for discussion on a possible SDG/Post-2015 goal on Food Security and Nutrition, and Sustainable Agriculture. A preliminary outline of key aspects to be considered for this subject is made, as well as suggestions provided on the process, monitoring and implementation for Post-2015 goals and targets. Furthermore, the paper contains an initial proposal of 5 specific targets, which are supported by short rationales.

The following key messages are outlined in this paper:

- Due to the overwhelming relevance of sustainable agriculture as well as food security and nutrition for sustainable development and poverty reduction, these issues have to be given high priority in the Post-2015 Goals.

- To develop fair and inclusive post-2015 Goals, a multi-stakeholder approach which includes Farmers Organisations and Civil Society must be pursued. The Major Groups have already made a proposal for the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

- To achieve sustainable development, a holistic approach that promotes sustainable agriculture and food systems with positive economic, environmental, and social impacts is necessary: Nourish the people, nurture the planet!

1 Agriculture is understood in a broad sense also comprising fisheries, aquaculture, husbandry, forestry and related forms of food production.
• **Smallholder farmers cannot be left behind** if we want to arrive at an effective set of post-2015 Goals. One of the targets for a sustainable agriculture and food and nutrition security goal needs to consider this aspect.

• **Women play a major role** all along the food chain from the field to the plate. Their knowledge and needs have to be taken into account on all levels of decision making regarding agriculture and food systems.

• To address current and future global goals, a **transformation of agriculture and food systems is necessary**.

• Progress on the post-2015 Goals needs to be **measured and monitored by independent bodies** with the relevant knowledge, competence and capabilities.

Therefore, the **following goal and targets, to be achieved by 2030, are proposed**:

**Goal:** Adequate, permanently available, and sustainably produced food and nutrition for all

**Target 1:** End malnutrition and hunger in each of their forms, including undernutrition, nutritional deficiency and overnutrition, so that all people enjoy the right to adequate food at all times.

**Target 2:** Ensure that all smallholder farmers and other rural communities, in particular women and disadvantaged groups, enjoy a decent livelihood and income, and protect their right to access to productive resources and assets, everywhere.

**Target 3:** Achieve the transformation to sustainable, diverse and resilient agriculture and food systems that conserve natural resources and ecosystems, and realize a land-degradation neutral world.

**Target 4:** Achieve zero post-harvest and other food losses and waste.

**Target 5:** Establish inclusive, transparent, and equitable legislative and other decision-making processes on food, nutrition, and agriculture themes at all levels.
1 INTRODUCTION

Every fifth child born today will grow up hungry. Since the mid-1990s, the number of malnourished people has increased by more than 100 million, despite the fact that the world’s farmers have been producing an average of 4600 Kcal per person, or about twice as much as needed. This imbalance is driven by many factors, including losses between harvest and consumption today, an increasing amount of agricultural land devoted to the production of biofuels, but also the consumption behaviour. At the same time, natural resources are shrinking, ecosystems are more and more degraded, and the negative impacts of climate change are painfully felt in many parts of the world, especially by those already living in poverty.

These problems are not least the result of mistakes in agricultural policy. For much too long, an industrialized and reductionist agricultural model was promoted that – with few high-yielding varieties and their need for high fertilizers application rates, water, and pesticides – got the most out of the soil in the short run without concern about the ecological consequences. And although this yielded an increase in revenues, it reduced the health of soils destroying its own basis in the long run.

Against this background, a group of 400 agricultural scientists published the 2008 IAASTD Report (International Assessment of Agricultural Science & Technology for Development) on behalf of various UN organizations and the World Bank, which demands a fundamental shift in agricultural policy and a re-orientation of agricultural research towards an agro-ecological, multifunctional agriculture that does not seek the highest potential but a sustainably possible yield, preserves soil and water, and sustains and promotes the fertility of soil and biodiversity while producing nutritious and diverse food in adequate quantity for the present and future population.

Consensus on the necessity of such a transformation is growing. Transforming agriculture and food systems can best be done when all stakeholders are involved in decision-making, especially women, small-scale farmers and food producers, and other disadvantaged groups. However, making this transformation happen requires decisive action and political commitment as it can be attained through ambitious global goals and targets.

In this regard, Rio+20 provided an important milestone and opportunity. One of the main outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference was the agreement by member States to launch a process to develop a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs) that could be a useful tool for pursuing focused and coherent action on sustainable development. The SDGs might be further merged into one process together with the on-going work on the “post-2015” follow-up framework for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which are set to expire in 2015. In the following, the SDGs and the post-2015 framework are referred to as the Post-2015 Goals.

It is now the time to put in place an integrated set of goals, including environmental, economic, social, and health related aspects. To achieve this, sustainable agriculture and food and nutrition security have to be given high priority.
2 KEY ISSUES

In developing the Post-2015 Goal, these key issues should be considered:

- **HIGH PRIORITY FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE:** Agriculture is both a cause and a solution to environmental problems. Agriculture is linked to biodiversity loss and climate change. However, sustainable agriculture also has the unique potential to mitigate climate change and strengthen resilience to the impacts of climate change. Furthermore, agriculture is the most effective way to reduce poverty. Sustainable agriculture is essential to fight poverty and save the planet.

- **NOURISH THE PEOPLE – NURTURE THE PLANET:** To achieve sustainable development, a more holistic approach that promotes sustainable agriculture and food systems that have positive economic, environmental, and social impacts is necessary. Furthermore, existing trade-offs need to be discussed and related decisions taken in consultation with the affected stakeholders. Nourish the people – nurture the planet. Nothing less.

- **STRENGTHEN WOMEN’S RIGHTS:** Women play a major role in the production, processing, and provision of food. Their participation in the agricultural workforce and in activities following the harvest ranges between 20 and 70 per cent, a figure which is on the rise in many developing countries. It needs time, energy, water, infrastructure, and knowledge to prepare meals. The related time-consuming activities need to be considered. The position of women and especially their access to resources in agriculture and food systems must be improved as well as their rights as workers within the food system must be safeguarded.

- **SMALLHOLDERS CANNOT BE LEFT BEHIND:** One of the targets of a goal for sustainable agriculture and food and nutrition security should be to empower and improve the livelihoods and income of the most disadvantaged by specifically addressing smallholder food producers, including women and indigenous people and disadvantaged groups.

  *We cannot leave smallholders behind, nor can we leave women behind, if we want to establish an effective set of goals for Post-2015.*

3 PROPOSED GOAL

For the theme of “Food Security and Nutrition, and Sustainable Agriculture”, we propose the following Post-2015 Goal:

*Adequate, permanently available, and sustainably produced food and nutrition for all*

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4 PROPOSED TARGETS

In order to achieve this goal, a set of targets needs to be realized. Such targets may guide coherent action towards realizing the Post-2015 Goals. We propose the following 5 targets and outline short rationales for each target.

Target 1: End malnutrition and hunger in each of their forms, including undernutrition, nutritional deficiency and overnutrition, so that all people enjoy the right to adequate food at all times.

- In order to gain access to sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food and nutrition for all people, all dimensions of malnutrition have to be addressed in an integrated manner. Only coherent actions incorporating all aspects of this important issue will be successful. In this regard, actions have to be contextual and pay special attention to nutrition during pregnancy and early childhood.

- The Right to Food and Food Sovereignty should be explicitly addressed in the targets so as to further support their overarching role in achieving the goal.

- The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement, as defined by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its General Comment 12. The core content of the right to adequate food implies the availability of food in a quantity and quality sufficient to satisfy the dietary needs of individuals, free from adverse substances, and acceptable within a given culture. It further encompasses the accessibility of such food in ways that are sustainable and that do not interfere with the enjoyment of other human rights.3

- The target reflects the Zero Hunger Challenge with its proposed aim to achieve 100 per cent access to adequate food all year round and to end malnutrition in pregnancy and early childhood.

Target 2: Ensure that all smallholder farmers and other rural communities, in particular women and disadvantaged groups, enjoy a decent livelihood and income, and protect their right to access to productive resources and assets, everywhere.

- One of the targets of a goal for sustainable agriculture and food and nutrition security needs to address the livelihoods and income of the most disadvantaged, in particular smallholder farmers, including women, farmworkers, indigenous peoples and other traditional communities such as fisher folks, and dwellers, among other people.

3 Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment 12. Available online at: http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/3d02758c707031d58025677f003b73b9
Access to and control over productive resources means that people have secured ownership or rights to use of the resource in question. Productive resources include land, water, seeds, forests, biodiversity and fisheries. Access to assets includes financial and non-financial services, information, environmentally sound technologies, and knowledge.

The vast majority of the world's farmers are smallholder farmers. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 80 per cent of farms cultivated are smaller than 2 hectares. Worldwide, 70 per cent of food production stems from 525 million small operations, which collectively cover the cultivation of 40 per cent of the planet's arable land. A reduction in hunger can only be achieved by including smallholder farmers in any solution. The majority of these farmers are women, representing one of the most disadvantaged groups in farming.

Women play a major role in the production, processing and provision of food. Their participation in the agricultural workforce and in activities following the harvest ranges between 20 and 70 per cent, a figure which is on the rise in many developing countries. All over the world, it is mainly women who are responsible for the provisioning and preparation of food. Still, women and girls are those suffering most from hunger and malnutrition. Women are also subject to numerous disadvantages in the agriculture sector. They earn less and have fewer rights. In Sub-Saharan Africa, women produce 80 to 90 per cent of the food, but own a mere 2 per cent of the land and receive just 10 per cent of all micro loans for agriculture. The position of women in agriculture in developing countries must be improved. According to some estimates, providing women with equal access to education and agricultural resources would translate into a 20 to 30 per cent increase in yields, which in turn would reduce the number of hungry by 100 to 150 million.

The important role of smallholder farmers in sustainable development has already been recognized in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security at the World Food Summit 1996. It mentioned the need to promote the empowerment of small-scale family farmers, fishers and foresters, both women and men, to set up their own cooperatives and business undertakings, as well as farmers' and fishers' financial and mutual institutions.

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5 UNEP (2011), Green economy Report, p. 41
6 Böll-Stiftung (2011), Less hunger through more ecology, 2011, p. 2
7 Book Chapter contributed by Hans Herren DPG 2010
8 Ibrahim Forum 2011, African Agriculture: Malnutrition, From Meeting Needs To Creating Wealth, p.32
9 Ibrahim Forum 2011, African Agriculture: Malnutrition, From Meeting Needs To Creating Wealth, p.32
People's access to the food they need depends on food markets functioning well at local, national, regional and global levels, and on their ability to pay for food. Fair and localised markets, together with rules and regulations that foster fair trade and the respect of human rights all contribute to more equitable access. Sustainable food value chains – from production, through processing, transport and trade, to consumers – increase the availability of food, generate income and help create and maintain decent jobs.

The Zero Hunger Challenge has also called for increased productivity and income of smallholders, particularly women. However, the increase in productivity and income that is actually needed will depend on the specific context.

Target 3: Achieve the transformation to sustainable, diverse and resilient agriculture and food systems that conserve natural resources and ecosystems, and realize a land-degradation neutral world.

Sustainable agriculture and food systems improve food security, eradicate hunger and are economically viable, while conserving land, water, plant and animal genetic resources, biodiversity and ecosystems and enhancing resilience to climate change and natural disasters. This notion was endorsed by the Rio+20 outcome document (Para 111).

The key characteristics of sustainable, diverse, and resilient agriculture and food systems can be common to all future agriculture and food systems, both large and small. They include: the sustainable management of land, water and other natural resources, regenerative soil management, zero land degradation, responsible land tenure, increased resource use efficiency, minimized emissions and use of non-renewable inputs, high biodiversity and farm animal welfare, strengthened urban-rural linkages, fair prices at farm gate level, access to markets and locally produced food of high nutritional quality, sustainable diets and consumption patterns, reduced waste and other unsustainable practices throughout the food chain, improved public health, empowerment of rural women, safeguarding the rights of agriculture and food systems workers, system resilience, social safety nets and disaster preparedness.10

The preservation and sustainable use of natural resources is key to sustainability in agriculture and food systems. However, natural resources are currently overused or degraded. Water supplies are running low, forests are disappearing, the diversity of species, races and varieties, the very basis of plant and animal breeding, is shrinking. In some regions of the world, namely in tropical and seasonally dry regions, the change of climate will severely diminish the potential profit of agriculture. With a share of almost a third in global greenhouse-gas emissions, agriculture and forestry are amongst the most important causes of climate change. When considering the total industrial food system, the GHG emissions are even between 44 and 57% of the total.

40 per cent of the soil used by agriculture is already degraded. Considering that soils are the basis for life on earth, this aspect merits specific attention. Soils are crucial for food production, sustainable use of water and energy, and poverty eradication. Moreover, soils play a key role in adaptation and mitigation strategies for climate change. Nevertheless, soils have been taken for granted for too long. Land degradation directly affects 1.5 billion people and costs about 40 billion US dollars each year. 1.9 billion hectares of agriculture land have already been degraded to a greater or lesser extent due to intensive and improper use of this resource. The Rio+20 outcome document recognized the need for urgent action to reverse land degradation and to strive to achieve a land-degradation neutral world in the context of sustainable development (Para 206).

These issues can be addressed by realizing the transformation to sustainable agriculture and food systems, in particular agro-ecological and organic farming, that conserve natural resources and ecosystems, and protect public health. Sustainable agriculture has the unique potential to bind CO2 in the ground and can therefore mitigate climate change. In addition, agro-ecological farming makes agriculture more resilient - especially to climate change and its effects, and conserves natural resources and ecosystems. Using a broader “landscape approach” is promising in order to ensure an integrated view on the outlined challenges.

However, we cannot stop at transforming the way we approach agricultural production. We also need to include the wider food system: from production to consumption. A sole increase in production is not sustainable. Improvements need to be achieved throughout the whole food system. There is a need to encourage the decentralization of food chains, promoting diversified markets based on solidarity and fair prices, and short supply chains and intensified relations between producers and consumers in local food webs.

UNCTAD / GRAIN 2011
With regards to the resilience aspect, the target follows the call of the World Food Summit 2009. The World Food Summit declared the necessity to proactively face the challenges of climate change to food security, namely the need (1) for adaptation of agriculture to climate change, (2) for mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture, and (3) for increasing resilience of agricultural producers to climate change, giving particular attention to small agricultural producers and vulnerable populations.\(^\text{14}\)

This goal is partly supported by the Zero Hunger Challenge seeking to make all food systems sustainable.

**Target 4: Achieve zero post-harvest and other food losses and waste.**

- Reducing food losses and waste is an enormous opportunity to attain the overall goal, without the need to further intensify agricultural output with potentially damaging social and environmental consequences.

- Roughly one-third of the food produced in the world for human consumption every year is lost or wasted. Even if just one-fourth of the food currently lost or wasted globally could be saved, it would be enough to feed 870 million hungry people in the world\(^\text{15}\).

- Every year, consumers in rich countries waste almost as much food (222 million tonnes) as the entire net food production of Sub-Saharan Africa (230 million tonnes).\(^\text{16}\) Therefore, industrialised countries have a specific responsibility to reduce their food waste as fast as possible to zero.

- In developing countries, 40 per cent of this waste occurs within the agriculture sector itself\(^\text{17}\). In Sub-Saharan African countries, this roughly corresponds to the value of all grain imports\(^\text{18}\). The primary causes of food waste in developing countries, which are inadequate storage, processing and transport capacities, need to be tackled.

- A target on this matter had already been endorsed at the Rio+20 conference in the call to significantly reduce post-harvest and other food losses and waste throughout the food supply chain (Para 110).

- The Zero Hunger Challenge calls on countries to achieve a zero rate of food waste and losses.

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\(^\text{17}\) UNEP, Green economy (2011), Agriculture – Investing in natural capital, p. 47
\(^\text{18}\) Ibrahim Forum 2011, African Agriculture: Malnutrition, From Meeting Needs To Creating Wealth
Target 5: Establish inclusive, transparent, and equitable legislative and other decision-making processes on food, nutrition, and agriculture themes at all levels.

- Good governance at all levels is key to reducing food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition, and to achieve the needed transformation to attain the Post-2015 Goal. This should be fostered through enhanced national ownership and democratic decision making at all levels, more explicit rights-based approaches, strengthened accountability, as well as more inclusive legislative and decision-making processes. Such processes need to give particular attention to women, smallholder farmers, and other disadvantaged groups.

5 SCOPE, PROCESS AND MONITORING

We believe that the Post-2015 Goals should be global and apply to both the Global North and the Global South, but that goals and targets may be adapted by each region and country.

To develop fair and inclusive Post-2015 Goals, a multi-stakeholder approach which includes Farmers Organizations and Civil Society must be pursued. To that end, the Major Groups have already made a proposal on how to involve different stakeholders in the process of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.19

Policy changes must be made at all levels to ensure a coordinated and sustainable transformation. We need legal frameworks that: guarantee stable and fair prices for food producers; promote agro-ecological and sustainable agriculture; internalise external costs and benefits into food prices; and implement land reforms.

With a view to foster country-level implementation, the UN should provide support, upon request, in the assessment of national or regional agriculture and food systems in order to identify actions to attain the Post-2015 Goals and allocate resources efficiently and effectively.

Progress on the Post-2015 Goals needs to be measured and monitored by independent bodies with the relevant knowledge, competence and capabilities. In the field of food security and sustainable agriculture, the Committee on World Food Security in Rome, in cooperation with relevant UN bodies, as the foremost participatory body in this realm, might be best suited to provide a platform for this purpose.

Based on the lessons learned from the MDGs, progress assessments should be prepared by the relevant UN bodies (FAO, IFAD, WFP, HLPE of the CFS) or multi-stakeholder expert groups in a transparent process with input from all relevant stakeholders – especially small-scale farmers, women, and marginalized groups.