



## **Statement to the UN Food Systems Summit**

**From the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition, and the African Leaders for Nutrition**

The importance of the UN Food Systems Summit as a catalyst for change is beyond doubt. The world is facing two major crises which are intimately linked to food systems.

First, we are amidst a climate and environmental crisis impacting the ability of food systems to securely deliver the food and nutrition on which we all rely to survive and thrive. Moreover, food systems are themselves a major part of the problem through the harm they are causing to the planet. In their current state, our food systems are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, and a driver of biodiversity loss and land use change impacting environmental systems, notably deforestation.

At the same time, there is a global health crisis underpinned by the inability of today's food systems to deliver healthy, affordable diets for all. Even before COVID struck, healthy diets were unaffordable for three billion people. This is a shocking failure of policy at the global scale, leading to countless millions being disadvantaged by poor health, with impaired physical and mental development, and by poverty.

The Summit could not be more timely and has already achieved a great deal throughout the preparations. It has reinforced the need for countries to take an approach that goes far beyond agriculture to transform entire food systems, and which also embraces sustainability. It has also energized many countries to rethink their food systems and begin to plan their transition to full sustainability. However, the Summit is not the end of the process, but rather the beginning of the hard work.

Countries will need to invest substantial physical and political resources to turn their plans into reality. However, much could be achieved by doing things differently in addition to spending new money. A clear example concerns subsidies. A recent United Nations report estimates that farm subsidies – amounting to more than half a trillion dollars of support a year – are heavily biased towards measures that are harmful to people's health, the climate, and drives inequality. Projected increases in subsidies could substantially worsen the situation.

Countries will need to look hard whether the totality of their actions will constitute a coherent strategy for delivering sustainable and healthy diets, equitably and securely for all of their populations. Similarly, at a global level, it is essential that all of the actions will 'add up' and enable us all to tread the narrow pathway to stabilizing rising global temperatures before it is too late. The scale and pace of reform of food systems also needs to be a key concern for the forthcoming Conference of the



Parties on Climate Change (COP-26) in Glasgow, UK, and to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-15) in Kunming, China.

It is essential that the global community embrace a new approach. Food systems are interconnected worldwide, and all countries need to work together on their transformation. The global North risks missing huge opportunities for multi-win solutions by underestimating the engagement on these issues by low- and middle-income countries which have real potential to contribute to national, regional, and global solutions. It is also important that global leaders attending the Summit recognize that food systems are key to addressing global challenges embodied in the Sustainable Development Goals – relating to hunger and nutrition, health and wellbeing, poverty, inequality, climate change and the environment. All of these challenges are intertwined and should not be addressed in isolation.

In conclusion, The Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition, and the African Leaders for Nutrition strongly welcome the UN Food Systems Summit and all it has already achieved. However, changes are needed at a global level and Summit delegates are urged to provide the strongest possible level of political commitment to this goal. We stand ready to advise and assist both countries and relevant regional organisations as this vital agenda is taken forward.

Signed by the following on behalf of the **Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition**<sup>1</sup>

Sir John Beddington, Chair, Former UK Chief Scientific Adviser

Professor Srinath Reddy, Member, President, Public Health Foundation of India

Dr Shenggen Fan, Member, Chair Professor, China Agricultural University

Dr Akinwumi Adesina, Member, Chair and President, African Development Bank Group

Dr Celso Moretti, Member, President, EMBRAPA

And on behalf of **the African Leaders for Nutrition**<sup>2</sup>

Dr Akinwumi Adesina, Chair and President, African Development Bank Group.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.glopan.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.afdb.org/en/topics-and-sectors/initiatives-partnerships/african-leaders-for-nutrition-initiative>



## Note to editors

About the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition:

The Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition was established in August 2013 at the Nutrition for Growth Summit in London. The Panel is now funded by the African Development Bank Group, Children's Investment Fund Foundation, Irish Aid and The Rockefeller Foundation. Previously, the Panel was previously funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), UK Department for International Development. The Panel is an independent group of experts and leaders who hold or have held high office and who show strong personal commitment to improving nutrition. The Panel is chaired by Sir John Beddington (former UK Government Chief Scientific Adviser). His Excellency John Kufuor (former President of Ghana) recently retired from being co-Chair. The Panel aims to provide guidance to decision makers, particularly governments, to inform and promote agricultural and food policies and investment for improved nutrition in low- and middle-income countries. Its influence is delivered through evidence-based technical and policy briefs, and Foresight Reports which are produced by the Global Panel Secretariat in London, Panel members and experts. These documents contain recommendations for policy interventions at a national, regional and global level. It also convenes high-level events in partnership with governments and other stakeholders.

About African Leaders for Nutrition:

African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN) is a platform of African Leaders interested in advocating increased nutrition investment in their respective countries or regional economic communities. ALN was created in 2015 by Dr. Akinwunmi A. Adesina, President of the African Development Bank, in partnership with former President of Ghana, H. E. John Kufuor, as a vehicle to tackle malnutrition in Africa. The African Union endorsed the establishment of the ALN during the 30<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly held in January 2018 with a mandate to coalesce and sustain the high-level political will and leadership necessary to strengthen nutrition as a priority and increase the financial commitments required to achieve the continental and global nutrition targets by 2025. ALN enlisted eight Heads of States and Eminent Leaders as nutrition champions to rally political support across the African Union regional member states and the implementation of the African Regional Nutrition Strategy (2015-2025) and the African Renewed Initiative for Stunting Elimination (ARISE) strategy.