

# Global Food Security Summit policy brief: Building effective global food security

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Recommendations from UK INGOs ahead of the Global Food Security Summit  
in London, 20 November 2023

We welcome the UK government's holistic approach to food security by breaking the silos of work on food security and bringing humanitarian assistance, nutrition, food systems, climate action, trade, investment, research and innovation and broader development work together.

This is an important opportunity to create greater coherence and complementarity as well as more effective cross-sector collaboration strengthening food systems and food security.

## Overarching points

- There needs to be a greater **policy coherence** strengthening the nexus between humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts, investing in long-term efforts focusing on strengthening food systems, building resilience, and supporting the most at risk and marginalised.
- **Inclusivity** should be considered throughout the event and its outcomes, including on how best to support and reach marginalised groups, including women and girls, children, and young people (half of the world's 345 million people facing acute food insecurity are children), older people (especially those who act as carers or children), people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ communities, ethnic minorities that face discrimination and others.
- **Women and girls'** nutrition needs should be considered as a priority in policies that shape food systems and behaviours, which must consider how women and girls experience the effects of climate change on nutrition.

For the Summit to make meaningful progress on global food security, here are our recommendations regarding the Summit outcomes:

### 1. New approaches to ending preventable deaths of children

- Reiterate the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) commitment to reach more than 50 million women, children, and adolescent girls with nutrition interventions in the next five years, with a specific focus on pregnant women and new mothers (and adolescent girls in particular).
- Commit to re-evaluate and increase the financial pledge made at the last Nutrition for Growth Summit early 2022.
- Commit to streamline the approach to treatment by supporting the operationalisation of the new WHO Wasting Guidelines, including, for example, by providing technical support to the development of operational guidelines and by championing the scale up and efficiency of promising new approaches, such as treatment of wasting by community health workers, which can help to bring treatment directly to children.
- Commit to strengthen locally owned health and social protection systems, including through the integration of the management, treatment and prevention of malnutrition and wasting, and targeted support mechanisms for the most vulnerable.

## 2. Science and technology to accelerate progress towards food security and nutrition

- Implement the commitments to technology transfer under the Paris Climate Agreement; technological advances to improve food security and nutrition must be shared more quickly, and be supported by upskilling relevant populations, including small scale women farmers.
- Ensure that innovations in sustainable agriculture are not covered by the stringent intellectual property provisions that are currently included in trade agreements.
- Ensure that the UK's trade agreements support lower and middle-income countries to access the full benefits of the digital economy, including allowing restrictions on data transfers, and requirements to reveal source code and algorithms.
- Support development of better tools for mapping risk at national, subnational and community levels, identifying the types of sudden onset shocks and long-term climate trends impacting these communities and how these trends overlay against the local political economy, societal fractures, and conflict dynamics.
- Invest in testing and scaling up solutions that protect people against cycles of under-development, violence, and displacement that are exacerbated by the climate crisis. This includes investing in climate-resilient agriculture, seed security, and scaling up of community-based disaster-risk reduction systems, such as early-warning systems.
- Support initiatives and practical solutions facilitating access to information, technology, and resources that increase yields of nutritious crops and food access in the last mile with a specific attention to the most vulnerable. For women to benefit from digital services, they first need access to digital tools and channels. New approaches such as device financing, agent networks tailored to women's needs, and innovations in increasing digital financial literacy can help rural women access and use digital services.
- Commit to finance/invest in development of and scaling up of digital services that serve smallholders and rural agribusinesses, especially women or women-owned businesses, across the entire food system, including by engaging all public and private stakeholders at local, national, regional, and global levels.

## 3. Anticipating and preventing famine and food security crises

Although true solutions to food security challenges lie in tackling the root causes of poverty and conflict and building long-term resilience, anticipatory action to address famine and food security will be important. The key asks for the UK government are to:

- Implement the UK-led G7 Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crises Compact, which aims to prevent and anticipate shocks by committing to early anticipatory action and preparedness. This includes securing funding to be readily dispatched ahead of crises that will affect nutrition and food security, such as climate disaster, and to set specific reach targets for interventions and a timed delivery plan.
- Meaningfully address the underlying drivers of conflict, by increasing investments in, and integration of, peacebuilding, good governance, and social inclusion efforts into drought response. These investments should focus on addressing root causes of conflict that stem from inequitable food systems, as well as the immediate triggers of conflict.
- Use bilateral and multilateral diplomatic influence to champion international humanitarian law in conflict, in particular upholding UN Security Council 2417, to help reverse the global escalation in conflict induced hunger.
- Acknowledge the role of comprehensive social protection systems that are well targeted, flexible, and responsive to shocks and stressors, and can deliver gender equitable outcomes. They are critical for the preservation of income security, and in turn for the preservation of food security.
- Ensure that emergency responses strengthen the local economies that households rely on to meet food and income needs during crises. Increased investments in resilience today mean more effective and scalable opportunities for anticipatory action ahead for future crises.
- Commit to new steps to actively anticipate and prevent the knock-on gendered effects of hunger crises, such as girls and women eating less, gender-based violence, child marriage, disproportionate educational dropout for girls and gaps in sexual rights and reproductive health services.

## Funding

- Release all available funding in humanitarian funding pipelines to the front line immediately given the scale of the need. Funding must be flexible, multiyear, and predictable, with pre-financing available to respond to early warnings with anticipatory action. It must be delivered through equitable local partnerships that support the leadership and capacity of local responders - including organisations led by women, youth, LGBTIQ+ people and persons living with a disability - and the participation of affected communities.
- Set an ambitious spending target for anticipatory action, by committing to allocate 15% of UK's humanitarian response funding to anticipatory action programming by 2025.
- Continued and increased investments in long-term climate change adaptation and resilience as a prerequisite for maximising the potential of anticipatory action, particularly in places within markets and limited economic opportunities.
- As an adaptation finance champion, we look to the UK to work with others to fill the rapidly growing adaptation finance gap.

### Local resilience

- Support the scale-up of locally driven approaches to humanitarian response, to complement traditional response approaches, such as Survivor Community-Led Response (SCLR), that build on communities' natural strengths and cohesion. This approach will allow communities to respond rapidly to their needs using their existing capacity, knowledge, and opportunities.
- Support responses that put community resilience at the centre in all phases, from relief to recovery and rebuilding. These efforts should also apply processes that are conflict-sensitive, and consider the specific needs of various groups, such as Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and host communities, and farmers and pastoralists.
- Strengthen vital sources of resilience, such as informal social protection, access to capital and markets, and opportunities to diversify livelihood and income sources. Interventions can achieve greater scale and coverage by investing in the existing systems that help communities cope with, and recover from, crises (for example, [community coping strategies](#), [social connections](#), and [psychosocial well-being](#)).

## 4. Building a climate-resilient and sustainable food system

### Food systems approach

- The Summit is a perfect moment to announce the UK joining the Alliance of Champions for Food Systems Transformation, to be launched at COP28. This Alliance will include “first-mover” governments that commit to accelerated action on food and agriculture. Much of the UK's policy development over the past few years - including on Environmental Land Management (ELM) and in connection with the National Food Strategy - strengthens the case for the UK to play a leadership role.
- Commit to ensuring that UK's efforts towards new sustainable food systems approach address previously entrenched agricultural and land gender inequalities and put local partners and communities at the centre.
- Leverage local knowledge and resources and prioritise public policies that reduce dependence on external financing and inputs, to ensure the long-term sustainability and autonomy of food systems planning and implementation.
- Recognise and prioritise a food systems approach to safeguarding food security, which would include joint action by governments (and others) on agricultural production, as well as on food loss and waste, and on diets and nutrition. This will help to build sustainable, healthy, resilient, and equitable food systems.
- Ensure trade rules are oriented to support climate action and sustainable food systems. This will require the UK to produce a full strategy to outline how this will happen. Concrete actions must include:

- urgent rethinking of the Agreement on Agriculture.
- setting core environmental standards for trade, designed in a way that works for developing country economies,
- ensuring border measures such as carbon border adjustment mechanism do not harm developing country economies; and
- removing provisions such as investor to state dispute settlement, which is imposing a significant penalty on developing countries for transitioning away from fossil fuels.

### **Support local producers and farmers**

The UK government should:

- Commit to mandatory human rights and environment due diligence (HREDD) that includes legislation on purchasing practices and a commitment to the payment of living incomes and wages, thus ensuring that farmers and workers across the world that are part of agricultural supply chains receive adequate prices for their produce and can earn a living income or a living wage.
- Ensure that smallholder farmers and workers are supported financially with required capacity in implementation and enforcement of the newly adopted Environment Bill. There is a risk that businesses, in their rush to prepare for the legislation, will simply pass the burden down to those at the bottom of the supply chain and lead to increasing poverty levels and prevent adoption of more climate friendly farming techniques. Smallholder farmers producing commodities in scope of this legislation often already live well below the poverty line.
- Prioritise supporting last mile communities to produce nutritious crops and improve livestock productivity while strengthening the capacities of local market systems to provide nutritious food and products year-round for local or regional markets rather than exports.
- Ensure investments (including climate finance) are holistic, implementing nutrition-focused activities alongside embedding a nutrition lens across market systems strengthening interventions, which is key to increasing community resilience to current and future shocks.

### **Supporting agroecology and climate resilient, sustainable agriculture**

- Farmers and agribusinesses should be supported to transition to climate resilient agricultural practices (e.g., perma-gardens, agroecological agriculture) and inputs (e.g., drought resistant / climate resilient seeds for nutritious agriculture, green fertilizers).
- Incentivise investments in community-led soil, water, and biodiversity management techniques advancing climate-smart agriculture and last mile agricultural markets, including working with financial service providers that support climate-smart investments by food system actors.
- Address long-term impacts of conflict, by removing landmines and unexploded ordnance and freeing up safe land for subsistence farming and to increase sustainable food production to meet the demands of local and national markets at affordable prices. Eight of the nine “hungriest

countries in the world” are impacted by explosive ordnance as a result of conflict, and there is an urgent need to boost domestic food production in many countries to reduce reliance on global supply chains and strengthen opportunities for subsistence agriculture.

## Contributors

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- MAG (Mines Advisory Group)
- Mercy Corps
- Oxfam
- Plan International UK
- Save the Children UK
- Transform Trade
- WWF-UK

## Useful references

- In June 2022, Bond sent [an open letter](#) to Boris Johnson ahead of the G7 Summit regarding the global food crisis which was co-signed by 70+ members. This can be referenced or used in framing our recommendations.
- Christian Aid responses from our Ripping the Band Aid paper: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-08/christian-aid-ripping-off-the-band-aid-2022.pdf>
- Plan International’s March 2023 [open letter](#) to the G7 on the hunger crisis
- Plan International’s 2023 report: [‘Beyond Hunger: the gendered impact of the global hunger crisis’](#)
- [August 2023 Speech](#) on practical solutions to the global malnutrition and hunger crisis by International Rescue Committee President & CEO David Miliband to the UN Security Council
- September 2023 Briefing from the International Rescue Committee on [‘No More Deaths From Wasting’](#)
- [Anticipatory Action in Advance of ‘Wicked Crises’: Insights from a real-time study of people’s lives in Somalia, 2020-2022](#). Mercy Corps and the Overseas Development Institute as part of the FCDO-funded [SPARC](#) research consortium, April 2023.
- [Saving Lives & Building Resilience: Evidence on how we can do both as Somalia emerges from drought](#), Mercy Corps, June 2023
- [New research](#) from a recent IRC anticipatory cash pilot study in Nigeria, for example, suggests there could be benefits to sending cash ahead of climate disasters.

- Fairtrade has a wealth of experience and expertise in helping smallholder farmers to adapt to climate change, which we would be happy to share. [Examples](#) of this include projects on: income diversification, training on sustainable land agricultural management practices, techniques that enable plants to grow in hotter and drier conditions, or help farmers overcome climate-triggered diseases, such as coffee rust disease.

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