



*In the fight against hunger and malnutrition, the “One World – No Hunger” Initiative focuses on the most vulnerable groups: pregnant women, nursing mothers and young children.*

# “One World – No Hunger” A look at the German Development Ministry’s Initiative

With reference to the “One World – No Hunger” Initiative, Stefan Schmitz shows how food policies can support the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and highlights the interdependencies between the individual goals and targets.

In 2014, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) launched its “One World – No Hunger” Initiative, which aims to address some of the greatest challenges facing humankind. More than 800 million people worldwide are still chronically hungry. At least a billion more suffer from hidden hunger – malnutrition caused by a poor diet that is lacking in vital nutrients. In

other words, almost two billion people lack the food they need to lead a healthy and productive life in dignity.

Hunger and poor nutrition kill around 8,000 children each day and are thus the cause of around 50 per cent of all child deaths worldwide. Hunger is the greatest risk to health, claiming more lives each year than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. It is also a major obstacle to development. It leads to migration and expulsion, conflict and violence, a lack of economic prospects and hopelessness.

No other human right is violated as often as the right to food. This violation of human rights and dignity is one of the greatest scandals of our

modern world. It mainly affects rural regions, home to three quarters of the world’s hungry, where there is a lack of jobs and incomes and poverty is greatest. Very often, a key cause of hunger and malnutrition is not food unavailability but poverty: people cannot afford to buy adequate quantities of healthy food.

Although food insecurity is primarily a structural problem affecting rural regions, it is exacerbated by natural disasters, epidemics, and political crises and conflicts. At least 40 countries are classed as fragile, more than half of them in Africa. While more countries are now finding a way out of hunger through good governance and stable statehood, the number of fragile

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states and violent conflicts is growing. The percentage share of people who are hungry as a result of fragility and conflict is therefore increasing as well.

A modern and professional agricultural sector has a key role to play in combating rural poverty and hunger and building people's resilience to short-term crises. This applies particularly given that the world's population is growing. There is considerable scope to boost agricultural productivity in many parts of the world, and encouragingly, the willingness to invest in agriculture has increased in recent years. It is essential, however, that this investment creates jobs and incomes for those who need them most.

At the same time, there is a risk that further growth in agricultural production and investment will worsen the large-scale environmental degradation already caused by farming. In many parts of the world, agriculture in its present form poses the greatest threat to the environment. It is steadily expanding into the remaining natural areas, driving deforestation and biodiversity loss, and causing depletion of freshwater resources and soil fertility due to inappropriate land management and irrigation.

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### ■ The “One World – No Hunger” Initiative: key goals

In light of the above, the Initiative has two main goals:

- 1) To eradicate hunger and malnutrition: those hungry and malnourished today must gain access to adequate, affordable and healthy food as soon as possible. Here, the Initiative focuses on the most vulnerable groups: pregnant women, nursing mothers and young children.
- 2) To create and maintain the conditions that enable future generations, in a growing world population, to access adequate, affordable and healthy food. Agriculture everywhere must involve sustainable production, based on ecologically sound and socially equitable investment.

These goals are within reach, but all stakeholders must play their part. Political commitment, good governance, adequate public investment and an enabling environment for private investment in the countries concerned are prerequisites. Donors should make a contribution by supporting these national efforts, and the international community must ensure that global standards, rules and development strategies support action to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, rather than obstructing the attainment of these goals.

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### ■ The Initiative and the Sustainable Development Goals

The main purpose of the “One World – No Hunger” Initiative is to support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) proposed by the inter-governmental Open Working Group (OWG). SDG 2 is directly relevant to the Special Initiative: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. However, the Initiative – through its broad-based approach – also takes account of the linkage between the various SDGs. The right measures can support the attainment of many of the SDGs through various impact chains.

Efforts to promote health (SDG 3) are often needed to eradicate malnutrition, as it is essential to combat diseases such as diarrhoea, especially in children, in order to improve their nutritional status. Similarly, education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation (SDG 6) and access to modern energy (SDG 7) all positively impact on food and nutrition. Access to energy, along with a resilient infrastructure (SDG 9), is a prerequisite in developing a modern system of agriculture as the basis of food security. Providing secure access to land (part of Goal 1) and reducing harvest losses and food waste (part of SDG 12) can also do much to improve access and availability.

Food security for present generations is a core issue, but it should not be achieved at future generations' expense. Establishing the conditions necessary to safeguard food security for the future is therefore one of the Initiative's two main goals. It is also in line with two of the SDGs: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources (SDG 14) as the basis for a sustainable supply of food from the sea, and protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15). In the latter case, SDG 15 makes specific reference to the need to combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and end biodiversity loss. Ultimately, however, future food security will largely depend on agriculture's capacity to adapt to climate change. Keeping global temperature rise within manageable limits will greatly increase the agriculture sector's capacity to meet this challenge and thus reduce the risk of food insecurity for future generations. So in order to permanently eradicate hunger and malnutrition, urgent action to combat climate change is vital (SDG 13).

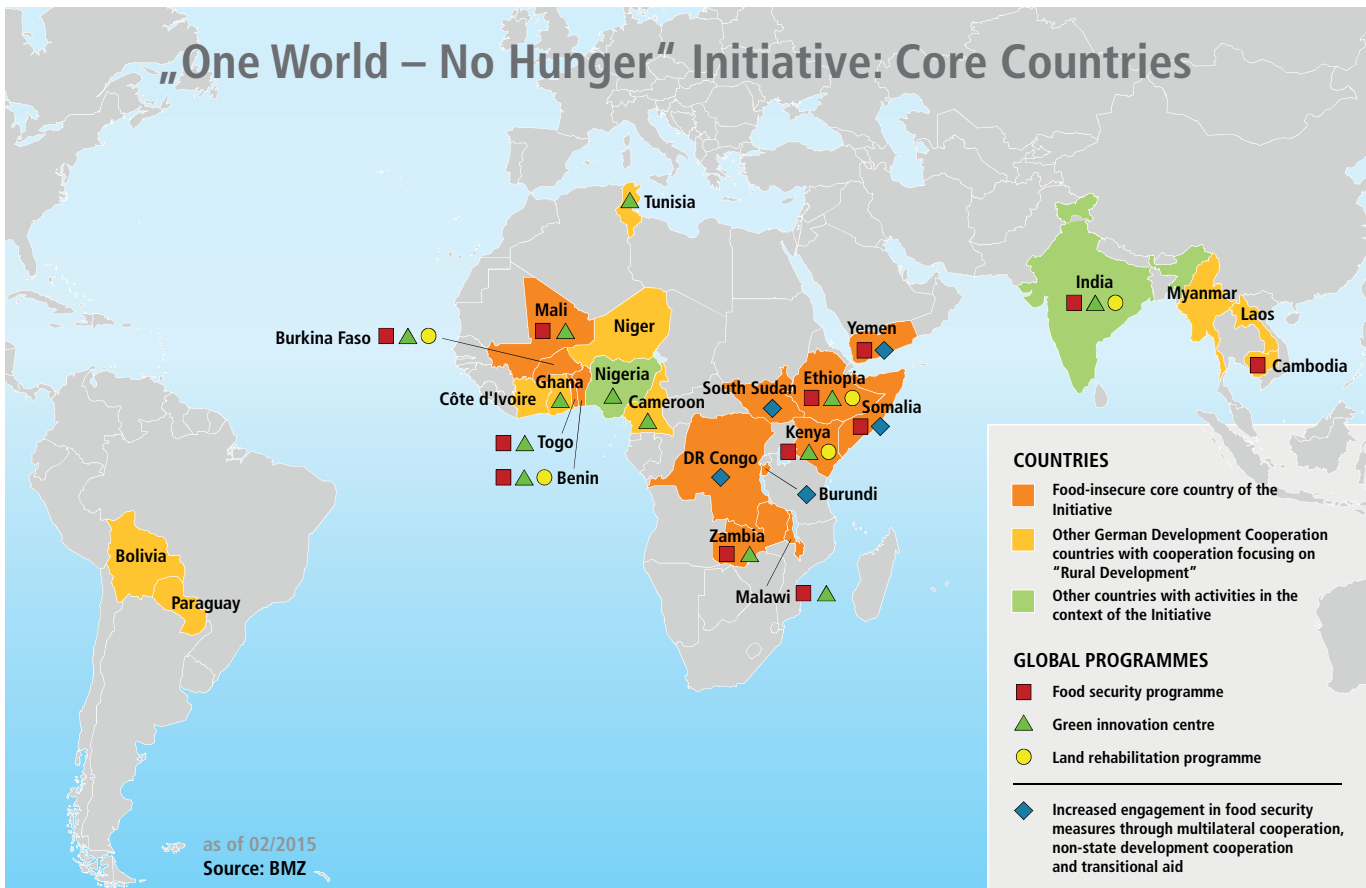
The Initiative's multi-sectoral approach responds to this challenge. Many measures across a range of areas are needed to safeguard food security for present and future generations. At the same time, eradicating hunger and malnutrition – which is the Initiative's main objective – will support the attainment of many other goals. People who are no longer hungry are better able to lift themselves out of poverty (SDG 1), live a healthy life (SDG 3), access learning and education (SDG 4) and build peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 16).

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### ■ The Initiative's six fields of action

#### 1) Food security

Food insecurity is a complex challenge, particularly affecting women, mothers and infants. All four pillars of food security – access, availability, use and stability – must be safeguarded. Causes of food insecurity vary from region to region but cultural factors,



lack of nutritional awareness, poor hygiene and an absence of health services often play a key role.

The measures needed are therefore equally complex and must focus not only on food but also on water, hygiene and sanitation, health care, nutritional awareness and social security. Our integrated food security measures which form part of the Initiative therefore aim to improve the nutritional status of pregnant women, mothers and young children, who will gain access not merely to adequate calories but to the healthy and nutritious food that is essential for their physical and mental wellbeing. This type of action to eradicate structural hunger and malnutrition among mothers and infants is one of the most effective forms of investment in the future.

### 2) Resilience and food security in crises and conflicts

Food insecurity is one of the most serious consequences of economic crises, natural disasters and conflicts. We provide transitional aid in order to improve food security in crisis settings

and during reconstruction. Located at the interface between humanitarian assistance and development, transitional aid links short-, medium- and long-term measures with the aim of building capacities and resilience of individuals, communities, civil society and the public sector to crises and future shocks, initiating and supporting change processes, and thus creating prospects for the future.

### 3) Innovation in agriculture and food production

In this field of action, our main priority is to establish "green innovation centres". A modern and professional agricultural sector has a crucial role to play in combating rural poverty and hunger. Innovation, rather than increased use of inputs, is now the main driver of productivity increases in agriculture, even in developing countries, and this positive trend must continue. Technical and institutional innovation must therefore be promoted so that it becomes an enabler of sustainable development. In order to boost agricultural productivity, upstream and downstream sectors all along the

value chain (harvesting methods, storage, transport, processing) must be developed and expanded. This will require more intensive research, training, agricultural extension, access to capital, appropriate technologies, and institutional reform. Green innovation centres therefore support development at every stage of agricultural and food production – from field to fork.

We are not advocates for industrialised agriculture. Instead, we support the development of a modern and professional farm sector, guided by the vision of sustainable agriculture based firmly around rural farming communities. We offer poor smallholder families the prospect of switching to market-based production, empowering them to move beyond subsistence farming, with its high risk of poverty and hunger. A productive food and agricultural sector creates jobs and incomes in rural regions, reduces developing countries' vulnerability to world market prices, and guarantees that food remains affordable for low-income groups in rural and urban areas alike.



#### 4) Towards a dynamic transition of rural regions

Rural poverty and hunger can only be eradicated if rural regions gain access to expanding urban markets. At the same time, as much wealth as possible must be generated and retained in rural regions. However, rural regions can only utilise the opportunities afforded by urbanisation if efforts to promote agriculture and food production are embedded in a comprehensive rural development strategy. Rural transition is required, based on social and environmental principles, in order to end the dominance of farming and support diversification of the labour market. It is important to develop agricultural and non-agricultural markets that support income generation, the accumulation of savings, and higher levels of social security and investment.

However, if well-performing markets and private investment are to improve quality of life and create a healthier economy in rural regions, the right conditions must be in place: schools and vocational training facilities, health centres, an energy supply, water and sanitation, and a good road network. Although some of these services can be delivered by the private sector with effective regulation by the state, they are, in essence, public services, which we promote via our regular development programmes.

Voluntary organisations and self-help are also important in stimulating the rural economy. We build the capacities of civil society, such as producer, consumer and worker organisations that guarantee fair access to markets, decent working conditions, and participation in local decision-making. Voluntary organisations give stakeholders a voice and ensure that local knowledge can be utilised in problem-solving. In this way, through our broad-based approach to rural development, we also support marginalised groups.

#### 5) Sustainable resource management in rural regions

In many parts of the world, agriculture causes deforestation and biodi-

versity loss, depletes water resources and massively reduces soil fertility. Through our programmes, we support sustainable agricultural development and responsible use of rural resources.

Land is the basis of all forms of farming and is the important production factor overall. However, it is under threat all over the world. In this field of action, we therefore focus on protecting soil and rehabilitating degraded land – aspects which have hitherto been neglected in development policy. Efforts to increase agricultural production will only be successful in the long term if land degradation and the rapid loss of soil fertility are halted and reversed.

#### 6) Responsible land rights

However, protecting nature resources and managing them sustainably is not enough. People also need equitable, sustainable and secure access to these resources. In many regions, insecure land tenure is a key cause of rural communities' inability to feed themselves or invest in the land. Secure access to land and other natural resources is essential to empower many smallholder farmers to lift themselves out of poverty and feed themselves. In many countries, legislation on land ownership and inheritance discriminates actively against women. We are working to improve land tenure worldwide, especially for women, smallholders and marginalised groups. This includes promoting responsible investment in land, based on respect for the rights of smallholder families and indigenous communities.

#### ■ Regional focus

Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the highest prevalence of hunger and malnutrition and the greatest food security challenges. In contrast to the global trend, the number of hungry people in Africa is increasing. The Initiative therefore focuses primarily on Africa. In order to maximise effectiveness, we have identified food-insecure core countries where most of the Initiative's actions and resources will be targeted. However, this does

#### Six guiding principles

- 1) Promote a sustainable and equitable market economy
- 2) Fulfil global responsibility
- 3) Deliver the right to food
- 4) Make gender equality a reality
- 5) Aim for effectiveness, economic viability and transparency
- 6) Promote partner country ownership and input

#### Six practical steps

- 1) Improve the strategic focus
- 2) Expand bilateral cooperation
- 3) Develop and contribute to global programmes and initiatives
- 4) Form partnerships with business, the scientific community and civil society
- 5) Promote development policy dialogue
- 6) Increase financial engagement

not preclude engagement in other countries, if appropriate.

The priorities pursued in the various fields of action (1-6 above) differ from country to country. The key factors determining the choice of country-specific measures are: partner country interests, scope to build on existing German development programmes, and prospects of success. On this basis, a decision was taken to initiate the following measures:

- Integrated food security programmes (fields of action 1 and 2) in 12 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Somalia/Somaliland, Togo, Yemen and Zambia.
- Promoting innovation in agriculture and food production through the establishment of "green innovation centres" (field of action 3) in 13 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Togo, Tunisia and Zambia.
- Land rehabilitation programmes (field of action 5) in five countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India and Kenya.