



Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Strategy

# Combining forces against hunger – a policy to improve food self-sufficiency

Norway's strategy for promoting food security in development policy



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# Foreword

## by the Minister of International Development

A little more than 100 years ago, Norwegian society underwent a process of radical change. We like to call it the 'Great Transformation', a period when cities and industrial towns grew rapidly – and more and more people in urban centres had to be fed.

Transport routes were developed and food producers in the countryside gained better access to markets. In agriculture, the introduction of new tools, improved livestock breeding practices and new crops allowed production to expand. There was a shift in Norway from household self-sufficiency towards a cash-based economy. Agriculture became increasingly linked with the market economy.

For agriculture, the transformation brought both growth and crisis. The breakthrough for farmers really came with the emergence of cooperative models at the beginning of the 20th century. Primary industry organised itself into long value chains. As a result, Norway has farmers and food processing plants all over the country to this day.

Farm smallholders in developing countries will face an even bigger transformation in the coming years. They will have to manage a transition to green business as well as increased digitalisation. They will have to produce food for an ever-increasing population. At the same time, climate change is making it far more difficult to produce food.

Small-scale producers are the backbone of local food security. In sub-Saharan Africa, 70–80 % of the population works in agriculture and fishing. Small-scale producers provide about 80 % of all food consumed in developing countries. Paradoxically, these very farmers and fishers represent the majority of chronically hungry families.

Another paradox is that African countries import food for about USD 60 billion every year. The African continent has both land and people. Africa **can** feed itself. Africa **wants** to feed itself. African leaders have been very clear: they want to develop their own primary industry and increase self-sufficiency.

In particular, they want to create jobs in food production value chains for their large cohorts of young people: jobs in sales, processing, technology and infrastructure. Just like in Norway during the Great Transformation. The opportunities for development in Africa are enormous.

This strategy is part of the Government's effort to follow up the ambitions set out in the Government's political platform. We are making food itself a priority. World hunger has increased since 2014. Almost 10 % of the world's population – some 828 million people – have too little food on a daily basis.

In the short term, fighting hunger is a matter of humanitarian aid. In the medium term, developing countries must build their own food systems. To feed their populations, they must be able to design and implement their own policies. They must achieve national food sovereignty. Food sovereignty in each individual country will mean greater food security globally. This strategy brings together the full force of Norwegian development efforts to address food security.

Furthermore, we are integrating our development and climate efforts. Climate change is a brutal reality for farmers and fishers in Africa. There is a widespread need for investment in climate adaptation. At the same time, we know we have to transform the world's food system in order to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals and reach the climate targets contained in the Paris Agreement. The world's small-scale farmers hold the key to sustainable food production. But they will need knowledge, technology and investments – and they need access to local markets.

An overall objective of the Government's development policy is to fight hunger and increase global food security. Our efforts are to bring benefits to people and the environment, locally and globally.



Anne Beathe Kristiansen Tvinnereim

Minister of International Development  
November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**BOX 1:**

**Five phases of food insecurity**

In 2004, the UN created a system to classify the severity of food insecurity in an area. This system, part of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), has become the global standard for classifying acute food insecurity and malnutrition.<sup>1</sup>

The system employs a scale with five levels, or phases, of acute food insecurity, with each phase defined by clear criteria, such as the number of hunger-related deaths in a population or the proportion of a population that is acutely undernourished due to lack of food:

**Phase 1: None/Minimal.**

Households are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical and unsustainable strategies to access food and income.

**Phase 2: Stressed.**

Households have minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in stress-coping strategies.

**Phase 3: Crisis.**

Households either:

- Have food consumption gaps that are reflected by high or above-usual acute malnutrition; or
- Are marginally able to meet minimum food needs but only by depleting essential livelihood assets or through crisis-coping strategies.

**Phase 4: Emergency.**

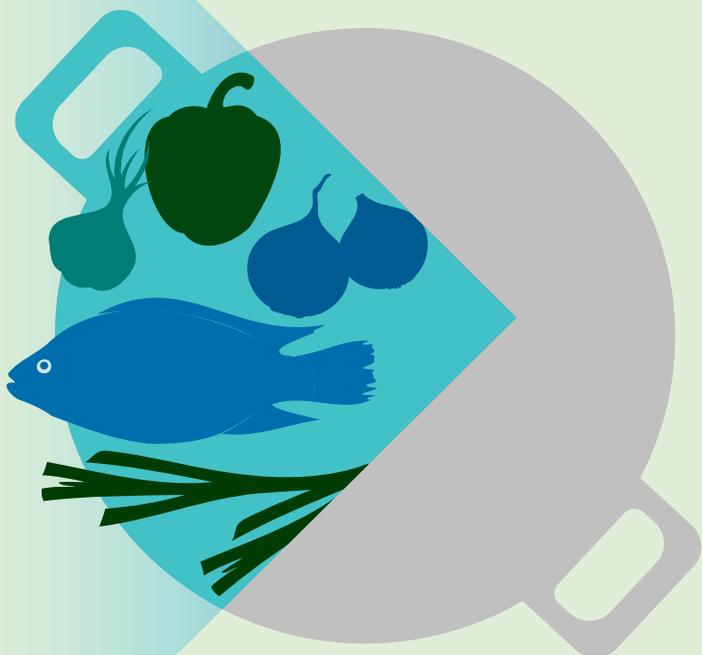
Households either:

- Have large food consumption gaps which are reflected in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality; or
- Are able to mitigate large food consumption gaps but only by employing emergency livelihood strategies and asset liquidation.

**Phase 5: Catastrophe/famine.**

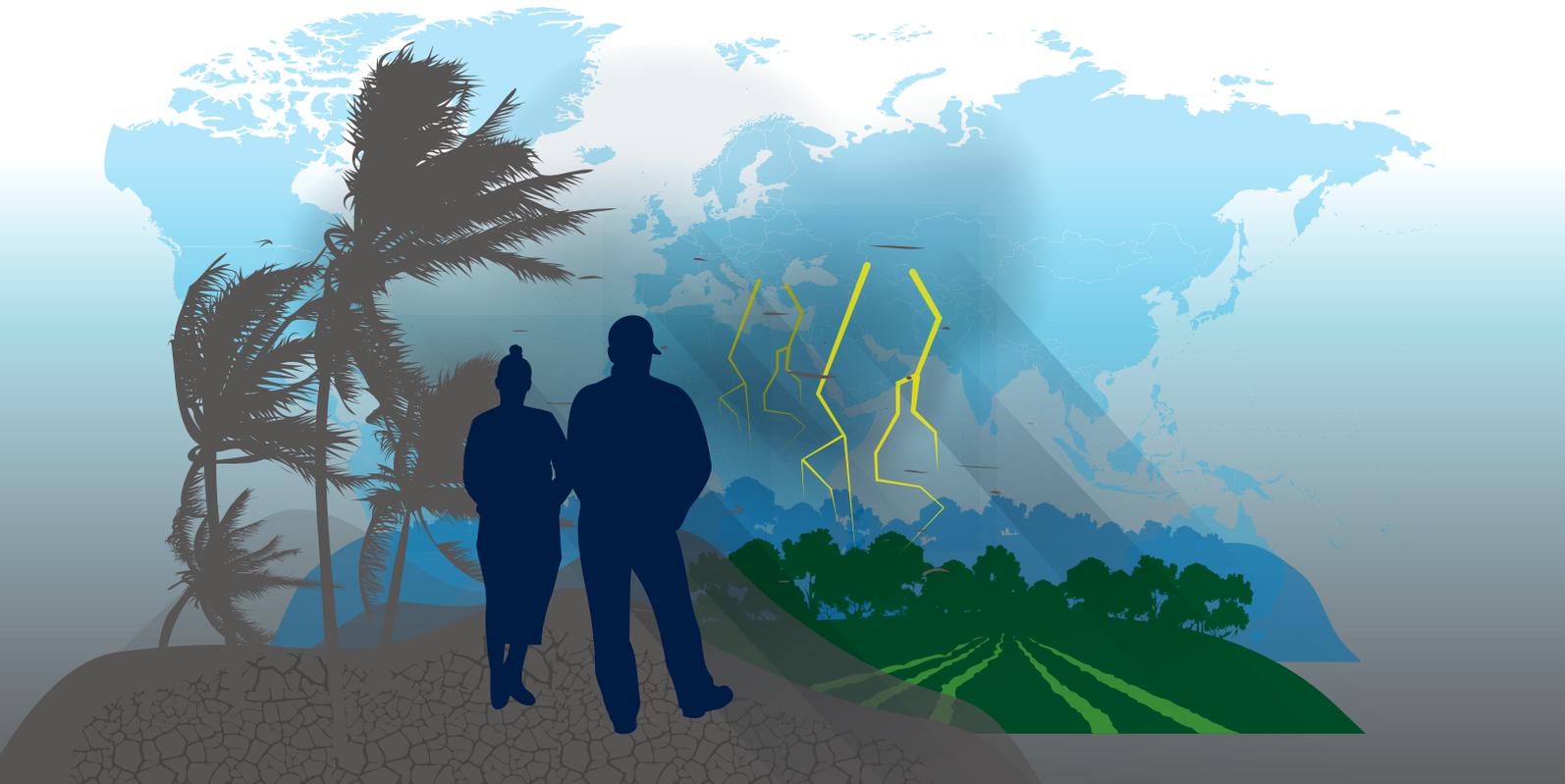
Households have an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs even after full employment of coping strategies. Starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evident.

(For Famine Classification, an area needs to have extreme critical levels of acute malnutrition and mortality.)



<sup>1</sup> IPC Global Partners (2021) Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Technical Manual Version 3.1: Evidence and Standards for Better Food Security and Nutrition Decisions, Rome, [IPC\\_Technical\\_Manual\\_3\\_Final.pdf](https://www.ipcinfo.org) (ipcinfo.org)

# Part I: The global situation



**The world is facing an unprecedented hunger catastrophe.** Global food security has worsened every year since 2014.<sup>2</sup> Almost 10 % of the world's population – around 828 million people – experienced chronic food insecurity in 2021<sup>3</sup>, meaning they lacked enough safe, nutritious food. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that 345 million people in 82 countries have been hit by acute food insecurity and that 50 million people in 45 countries are on the brink of famine<sup>4</sup> (see Box 1).

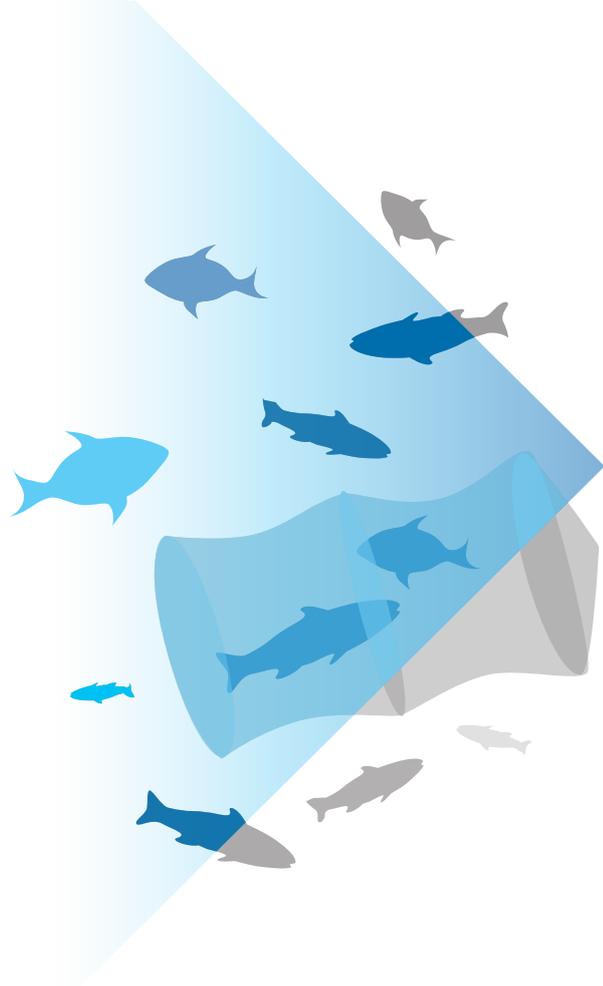
**The causes are complex.** The main causes of food insecurity and hunger are armed conflicts and natural disasters and extreme weather due to climate change. On top of these factors, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 brought shutdowns and lower economic growth. Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has further exacerbated global food insecurity. Exports from 'Europe's breadbasket' have fallen dramatically. Global fertiliser and seed supply chains have proved vulnerable. Food, energy, transport and fertiliser prices are volatile and far higher than before.

<sup>2</sup> FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (2022) *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022: Repurposing food and agricultural policies to make healthy diets more affordable*, Rome, FAO. [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022 \(fao.org\)](https://www.fao.org/state-of-food-security-nutrition-2022)

<sup>3</sup> WHO (2022) 'UN Report: Global Hunger Numbers Rose to as Many as 828 million in 2021: The latest State of Food Security and Nutrition report shows the world is moving backwards in efforts to eliminate hunger and malnutrition'. Article on the webpage of WFP on 6 July 2022, [UN Report: Global hunger numbers rose to as many as 828 million in 2021 \(who.int\)](https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/20220706-un-report-global-hunger-numbers-rose-to-as-many-as-828-million-in-2021-who.int)

<sup>4</sup> Anthem, P. (2022) 'WFP and FAO sound the alarm as global food crisis tightens its grip on hunger hotspots: Urgent humanitarian action needed as record numbers face starvation', article on the webpage of WFP on 21 September 2022, [WFP and FAO sound the alarm as global food crisis tightens its grip on hunger hotspots | World Food Programme](https://www.wfp.org/stories/wfp-and-fao-sound-the-alarm-as-global-food-crisis-tightens-its-grip-on-hunger-hotspots)

**The vulnerabilities in global food systems** have become increasingly apparent during the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Many developing countries are dependent on foreign imports to ensure national food security. In some countries, food imported from richer countries is cheaper than locally produced food, and this has led to a long-term decline in local production. This undermines the resilience of national food systems in many developing countries. It also deprives those countries of job creation and investment opportunities associated with farm input products and the processing and sale of locally produced foodstuffs.



**The consequences could be far-reaching and difficult to predict.** More people will fall into poverty because there will be fewer income opportunities. Food shortages could lead to social unrest, in turn providing fertile ground for extremism and political instability. Desperation could force millions of people to flee.

**The world's population is rising.** The UN expects the global population to increase to about 8.5 billion by 2030 and 9.7 billion by 2050. The population of sub-Saharan Africa could almost double to 2.1 billion by 2050.<sup>5</sup> The entire food production value chain will play a key role in creating jobs for the growing populations of developing countries. The Earth today has the potential to nourish populations of that scale,<sup>6</sup> but only if food production becomes more effective and technology use increases throughout the value chain.

**Today's global food systems are unsustainable for people and the environment.** Climate change and environmental degradation are a threat to agriculture, fishing and aquaculture. Year by year, unsustainable management of natural resources reduces the world's capacity to produce food.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, more than a third of global greenhouse gas emissions originate from food systems, though there is large variation between countries,<sup>8</sup> food systems and sectors. Agriculture uses 70 % of freshwater resources and accounts for 70 % of the loss of biological diversity on land.<sup>9</sup> But food production can be part of the solution. Carbon sequestration in soil, sound grazing practices and agronomic methods that improve soil quality and health are some of the ways agriculture can benefit the climate and the environment.

<sup>5</sup> UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022) *World Population Prospects 2022: Summary of Results*, UN DESA/POP/2022/TR/NO. 3, New York, United Nations, [World Population Prospects 2022: Summary of Results \(un.org\)](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/wpp2022/)

<sup>6</sup> Cornell University, IFPRI and IISD (2020) 'CERES2030: Sustainable Solutions to End Hunger Summary Report', [ceres2030\\_en-summary-report.pdf \(iisd.org\)](https://www.ceres2030.org/en-summary-report.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> WWF (2021) 'Farming with Biodiversity: Towards Nature-Positive Production at Scale', Gland, WWF International, [farming-with-biodiversity\\_wwf-report-2021\\_spreads.pdf](https://www.panda.org/our-work/conservation-science/farming-with-biodiversity-wwf-report-2021-spreads.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> IPCC (2019) Summary for Policymakers, in: 'Climate Change and Land: An IPCC Special Report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems, P.R. Shukla, J. Skea, E. Calvo Buendia, V. Masson-Delmotte, H.- O. Pörtner, D. C. Roberts, P. Zhai, R. Slade, S. Connors, R. van Diemen, M. Ferrat, E. Haughey, S. Luz, S. Neogi, M. Pathak, J. Petzold, J. Portugal Pereira, P. Vyas, E. Huntley, K. Kissick, M. Belkacemi, J. Malley (eds.) Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, [SPM\\_Updated-Jan20.pdf \(ipcc.ch\)](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/land/)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

**Small-scale farmers play a crucial role in food security.** About two-thirds of people who experience insecure food access live in rural areas and are smallholders, meaning they farm 2 hectares or less.<sup>10</sup> Such small-scale farms produce a significant proportion of the food consumed in developing countries. Smallholders sometimes fail to produce enough to feed their own households, but if given support, training in production methods and access to markets, they can often generate a surplus that can be sold for income. Smallholders often lack access to agronomic knowledge and basic inputs such as fertiliser, seed, pesticides, water and irrigation systems adapted to their needs and preferences.

**We can take much more food and nourishment from the oceans, water bodies and rivers.** Fish are one of the most important protein sources for people in developing countries. Aquatic food accounts for some 23 % of animal protein consumed in developing countries and helps to ensure intake of essential nutrients and micronutrients.<sup>11</sup> More than 775 million people depend on aquatic foods for adequate nutrition and well-being.<sup>12</sup> At the global level, small-scale fishing accounts for about half of the total catch volume, 90–95 % of which is consumed locally in rural areas.<sup>13</sup> The unique role of fish in food security and nutrition needs more recognition. Seafood has major potential as a source of key micronutrients, the lack of which in many diets leads to hidden hunger. Globally, fishing and aquaculture are dominated by large commercial interests, and production and sustainability are threatened by climate change and overexploitation of natural resources. Many traditional, small-scale, coastal fisheries and small-scale fish farms could become more environmentally and economically sustainable if research, regulation and monitoring were strengthened (see Box 2).

**Membership of organisations boosts income.** Small-scale farmers and fishers are often not included in technological innovation and policy decisions. But these food producers are one of the groups that are most vulnerable to climate change and other natural hazards. Their lack of organisational affiliation and bargaining power in markets is a major constraint. Membership of organisations or cooperatives is a means of increasing income, improving transparency, balancing power relations within food systems and creating more economic value locally. Studies have shown that membership in farmers' organisations and cooperatives can have a positive effect on farm incomes.<sup>14</sup> Affiliation with organisations also opens up opportunities for more effective climate adaptation, competence building, advisory services, credit access etc.

**Surplus food does not always reach markets.** Poorly functioning local value chains keep products from reaching local markets. There is insufficient investment in storage, cooling, processing, transport, energy and other forms of infrastructure. Unreliable access to stable markets makes it harder and more expensive to finance enterprises that process food from small-scale producers.

**Good animal health and animal welfare are vital.** Productivity in animal farming is directly affected by infectious diseases, malnutrition and poor animal welfare. Animal health expertise, infection control efforts, hygiene measures and biosecurity measures are all essential to ensure a healthy and safe food supply.

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<sup>10</sup> Lowder, S.K., Scoet, J. and Raney, T. (2016) *The Number, Size, and Distribution of Farms, Smallholder Farms, and Family Farms Worldwide*, World Development 87:16-29, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2015.10.041>

<sup>11</sup> FAO (2022) *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022: Towards Blue Transformation*, Rome, FAO, [The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022 \(fao.org\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> Tilley, A., Cohen, P.J., Akester, M., et al. (2021) *Increasing social and ecological resilience of coastal fisheries*, CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems, Program Brief: FISH-2021-24, Penang, Malaysia, [1eb440b06cf8769f21232b1a44df2fee.pdf \(worldfishcenter.org\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> FAO (2022) *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022: Towards Blue Transformation*, Rome, FAO, [The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022 \(fao.org\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> Cornell University, IFPRI and IISD (2020) 'CERES2030: Sustainable Solutions to End Hunger Summary Report', [ceres2030\\_en-summary-report.pdf \(iisd.org\)](#)

**Food loss and food waste are major challenges.**

The UN calculates that 30–40 % of all food produced is lost or thrown away before it reaches consumers.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Such loss occurs in all segments of the value chain.

In developing countries, much of it occurs early in the value chain, after the harvest or catch but before arrival at market. This waste has a negative impact on the environment, increases food insecurity and represents a major financial loss for small-scale producers whose resources are marginal to begin with.

**Malnutrition and undernutrition affect children's physical and cognitive development.**

A healthy diet is the basis of sound nutrition and health, but the trend has been going in the wrong direction. In 2020, more than 1 billion people in Africa could not afford to buy healthy food.<sup>17</sup> Access to a sufficient quantity of safe and healthy food is particularly important for women of childbearing age and young children. From the beginning of pregnancy, there is a crucial window of 1 000 days in which an adequately balanced and nutritious diet can prevent undernutrition from irreversibly impairing cognitive and physical development. Some 22 % of all children in the world under the age of five exhibited growth stunting in 2021.<sup>18</sup> Due to food prices, seasonal variation, poor infrastructure or a lack of information and knowledge about proper diet, not all households have access to nutritious and healthy food.

**Dietary challenges lead to a double burden of malnutrition.**

One challenge that is linked to the problem of poverty is that a diet based on industrially processed foods is often cheaper than a diet based on local ingredients and food traditions, but is also often less nutritious. A diet based on highly processed foods can lead to people being overweight or obese and malnourished at the same time. This is called the double burden of malnutrition and is causing a rising incidence of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes in low- and middle-income countries.

**Traditional cooking practices shorten lives.**

How food is prepared also has an impact on health. In many developing countries, traditional stoves and open fires often use wood, charcoal and dried cow dung as sources of energy. The smoke and soot emitted can have major harmful effects on health. Women and girls generally cook the food and thus are most exposed. The overuse of biomass as an energy source for cooking also contributes to deforestation and undermines ecosystem services that are important to food production.

**BOX 2:****High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy**

The High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (Ocean Panel) consists of heads of state and government from 17 countries, who are working together to achieve a sustainable ocean economy, and have drawn up an ocean action agenda to this end. The Ocean Panel was established at Norway's initiative and is chaired by the Prime Minister of Norway and the President of Palau. The Panel's action agenda is based on some 20 scientific reports, such as 'The Future of Food from the Sea'. It emphasises the important role of the oceans in providing enough food for a growing population, increasing resilience against crises and enhancing food security. The Ocean Panel has estimated that food production from the sea could be increased sixfold by 2050.<sup>19</sup> Most of the increase would come from aquaculture and would require research and substantial investment.

<sup>15</sup> UN (2022) 'Stop food loss and waste, for the people, for the planet', article on the webpage of the International Day of Awareness on Food Loss and Waste Reduction, 29 September 2022, Food Loss and Waste Reduction | United Nations

<sup>16</sup> HLPE (2014) 'Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems', a report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome, Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems (fao.org)

<sup>17</sup> FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (2022) *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022: Repurposing food and agricultural policies to make healthy diets more affordable*, Rome, Food and Agriculture Organization, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022* (fao.org)

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Costello, C., Cao, L., Gelcich, S. et.al. (2019) 'The Future of Food from the Sea', World Resources Institute, Washington, D.C., *The Future of Food from the Sea – WRI Ocean Panel*

## Part II: Strategy objectives



**The Government has made food security and the fight against hunger a priority area in Norwegian development policy.** This strategy is an important part of the Government's effort to achieve its development policy objective of promoting social change by fighting inequality and fostering economic development and welfare in developing countries.

The strategy also reflects a desire to transform the large-scale food systems that today feed much of the world's population but at the same time create major societal challenges. It highlights the need for more resilient food systems based to a greater extent on local and national production.

**Our vision is to promote, within sustainable frameworks, local production of nutritious food that is processed and sold locally and regionally, thus increasing the incomes of small-scale food producers, stimulating local job creation throughout the value chain, and expanding access to healthy food.**

Norway will help to ensure that no one is left behind by working to reverse the negative trends related to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 on ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture. There is a clear link between this SDG and the other SDGs.

Without progress towards ending hunger in the world, it will be impossible to eradicate **poverty** (Goal 1), to ensure **good health** (Goal 3) and **education** for all (Goal 4) or to reduce **inequalities** (Goal 10). At the same time, food production must be expanded while making allowances for the planet's carrying capacity by focusing on additional goals relating to **responsible consumption and production** (Goal 12), **climate action** (Goal 13), **life below water** (Goal 14) and **life on land** (Goal 15). Climate resilience and reduced environmental destruction are also essential to food production security. Achieving progress towards ending hunger will also require progress on other SDGs, such as **gender equality** (Goal 5), **clean water** (Goal 6), **clean energy** (Goal 7), **decent work** (Goal 8) and **innovation and infrastructure** (Goal 9).

This strategy is a key element of Norway's efforts to follow up SDG 1 on ending poverty. In developing countries, agricultural growth is three times more effective in reducing extreme poverty than growth in other sectors. In sub-Saharan Africa, growth in the agricultural sector can be up to 11 times more effective in reducing extreme poverty than growth in other sectors.<sup>20</sup> Such growth is heavily dependent on private-sector investments and functioning market mechanisms.

This strategy is therefore an important part of Norway's broad commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The international human rights instruments, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the upcoming UN Biodiversity Framework underpin the strategy.

This strategy is intended to help achieve the following:

- **an increase in local climate-resilient food production**
- **an increase in local value creation and incomes for food producers**
- **a reduction in malnutrition and undernutrition**
- **a reduction in the scale of hunger crises**

Implementation of the strategy is to be in line with other relevant policy documents, in particular the following strategies and action plans:

- **Climate change, hunger and vulnerability: Strategy for climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and the fight against hunger**
- **Norway's Humanitarian Strategy: An effective and integrated approach**
- **Strategy for Norway's efforts in the Sahel region**
- **National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security**
- **Equality for all: Norway's strategy for disability-inclusive development**

Norway's planned new action plan on women's rights and gender equality in foreign and development policy and the upcoming Africa strategy will also be important in this context.

Current global food systems are not sustainable, whether in terms of social sustainability, climate and the environment, or human, animal and plant health. **This strategy supports wider global efforts to change how our food systems work. It provides the framework for this Government's intensified efforts to transform food systems in developing countries.**

Norway will contribute to improved food security through targeted efforts that draw on and combine Norwegian expertise in various fields (see Box 3).



<sup>20</sup> [FAO \(2016\) The State of Food Insecurity 2015 | The State of Food and Agriculture 2016 | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(fao.org\)](#)

**BOX 3:**

**Knowledge Bank programmes**

The purpose of the Knowledge Bank is to strengthen expertise and capacity in public institutions through long-term cooperation. Several Knowledge Bank programmes will be especially important for the implementation of this strategy.

**Agriculture for Development** will be formally launched as a Knowledge Bank programme early in 2023. Norwegian public institutions are key partners in the programme, but will be joined by other specialist communities in order to provide a broad knowledge base to partner countries involved in the collaboration. The Knowledge Bank will also be able to draw on the expertise of multilateral organisations, international research institutes, civil society organisations, farmers' organisations and private companies.

Each partner country's needs and priorities will determine which sectors and focus areas are addressed, but initially efforts will be targeted towards the following:

- **Strengthening framework conditions:** Drafting and enforcement of laws and regulations; organisational affiliation and social dialogue; facilitating farmers' organisations; establishing cooperatives and seed ownership rights; and structuring local, national and regional value chains to accommodate the interests of local food producers.
- **Building competence** with an emphasis on fields related to the One Health approach, such as climate-resilient agriculture; forecasting and response systems for animal and plant disease outbreaks and the spread of pests; integrated plant protection; antimicrobial resistance; veterinary services related to food production; soil, water and ecosystem health; food safety; and nutrition.
- **Enhancing the knowledge base** by strengthening national capacity for collection, analysis and use of agriculture and food security data.

**Fish for Development** was established in 2016 to share Norwegian experience and expertise and help developing countries make fisheries and ecosystems more sustainable.

**Oceans for Development** was established in 2019 with the primary objective of promoting stronger, more sustainable and more inclusive ocean economies in developing countries.

Small-scale food producers are the backbone of local food security systems. Paradoxically, they are also the group most likely to suffer from hunger and malnutrition. For this reason, Norway's efforts will be targeted towards small-scale food producers.

**We will focus in particular on the following:**

- Identifying the most **relevant partners** for different initiatives, and building **effective partnerships**.
- **Supporting national plans and strategies** for sustainable development, food security and development of agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, including UN country frameworks, pan-African strategies such as the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth, and national food security or food system strategies and action plans.
- Promoting **coordination between different thematic initiatives**, such as by linking energy investments and food security measures if poor energy access is impairing food production efficiency and local value chains. Implementation of the strategy will also promote women's rights and gender equality in line with the new action plan.
- **Strengthening preventive action and integrated food security efforts.** In recent years, Norway has worked to strengthen early warning weather systems as well as other forecasting and alert systems, but there is still a need to scale up and improve the quality of such efforts and to enhance coordination between humanitarian and development assistance.
- Facilitating **increased cooperation with civil society and the private sector.** Norway will seek closer cooperation with civil society to achieve desired results and will also consider introducing risk-reduction measures to encourage private-sector investments relevant to the implementation of the strategy. Norway will also work to strengthen the role of the above-mentioned actors in the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).
- Working to ensure that **the strategy produces concrete results.** We will integrate evaluative research and outcome assessments into key initiatives, document results, and adjust the measures being employed when relevant.

This strategy will provide the framework for Norway's food security efforts through the UN, the development banks and the global funds, as well as

for Norway's bilateral cooperation on food security with partner countries<sup>21</sup> and other developing countries experiencing food security challenges. It will also underpin our collaboration with the business sector and civil society.

Norway's cooperation with the African Union (AU) is key to the strategy's implementation. The AU is a major regional actor whose decisions play an increasingly important role in norm-setting and policy development at national level, including with regard to food security and nutrition. Norway will contribute to the implementation of AU-adopted strategies and plans such as the Malabo Declaration. Norway will also seek to expand its dialogue on food security and nutrition with the AU and the AU's development agency (AUDA-NEPAD).

The Government is consolidating its food security efforts and has designated five countries in sub-Saharan Africa as priority countries: **Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, South Sudan and Tanzania.**

These priority countries have been selected because they face major food security challenges and are already partner countries where Norway has extensive cooperation in fields such as agriculture and fisheries/aquaculture. Dialogue with the national authorities and with local and multilateral actors active in these countries is well established, and there is potential to intensify our efforts.

Designation as a priority country will encompass expanded political dialogue and cooperation between Norway and the relevant national authorities, international organisations and local civil society organisations. Norway's embassies in the priority countries will implement the strategy through development assistance projects and programmes. In these countries, particular emphasis will be placed on coordination of Norway's various activities, including bilateral assistance, support provided through the UN and development banks, cooperation with civil society, and the use of Norwegian expertise. Norwegian embassies in the priority countries must have adequate expertise in agricultural development and/or fisheries and aquaculture development. Norway will create a special diplomatic envoy position to promote food security in Africa, which will be affiliated with one of the embassies in the region.

In addition to focusing on the priority countries, Norway will work to promote food security in line with the objectives of this strategy in other countries, where relevant.

## General guidelines

The Government's development policy is based on the SDGs, the climate targets and the international human rights instruments. Efforts to implement the strategy will incorporate the four cross-cutting issues in Norwegian development policy:

- human rights
- women's rights and gender equality
- climate change and environment
- anti-corruption

The strategy takes a human rights-based approach that seeks to empower rights holders to claim their rights and enable the authorities to uphold those rights.

Safeguarding the right to food for all people is at the core of this strategy. The right to food is recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which the UN adopted in 1948. In 1966, this right was reiterated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Parties to the Covenant are obligated to respect, promote and protect the right to food and to take appropriate steps to ensure gradual progress towards full realisation of the right to adequate food.

**The recognition that food is a human right** means that the authorities in countries where people are hungry or starving have a duty to secure food for all inhabitants. But to fulfil this duty, the countries must have the necessary framework in place. There are a number of underlying reasons and barriers that prevent many countries from fulfilling the right to food.

Discrimination and marginalisation of vulnerable groups is often cited as one reason. That is why it is necessary to ensure that human rights principles such as inclusion, non-discrimination, accountability and participation are integrated into development cooperation. Realising the right to food will require concrete efforts to combat discriminatory laws and practices that often lead to inequitable distribution. Indigenous people's rights, women's rights, workers' rights, children's rights and the rights of persons with disabilities are key considerations in the implementation of this strategy.

Women are responsible for much of the food production for households in rural areas of

<sup>21</sup> Prop. 1 S (2022-2023) Proposition to the Storting (draft resolution) for 2023 budget year.  
[Prop. 1 S \(2022-2023\) \(regjeringen.no\)](https://www.regjeringen.no)

developing countries, especially in the agricultural sector. In implementing this strategy, we will therefore maintain a special focus on **women's rights and gender equality** (see next subsection).

The global climate crisis and its impacts on food production are expected to be a significant contributing factor to conflicts in the years to come. Norway's efforts will be in line with its National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, which contains objectives relating to inclusive crisis management and conflict mitigation practices where local women's networks and organisations play a key role.

**Climate change** is posing obstacles to sustainable development, especially in food production.

**Environmental degradation and reduced biological diversity** also threaten food production from soil, fresh water and the oceans. At the same time, agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture can have harmful effects on the climate and the environment.

Much of the work to implement the strategy will be specifically climate-related. This includes efforts to adapt to a changing climate and more extreme weather events, and efforts to counter the effects of climate change. We will prioritise measures that support Norway's target to at least triple funding for climate adaptation by 2026 compared to the 2020 level.

All recipients of aid funding from Norway are required to carry out an assessment of potential environmental and climate impacts, indicate how any such impacts have been addressed, and document that food producers will be able to adapt to climatic changes such as rising temperatures and more frequent droughts and floods. We will promote and support environmentally sustainable, climate-friendly measures that make food production more resilient to climate change.

**Corruption** undermines sustainable development. Norway has zero tolerance for corruption, which means among other things that Norway and its partners will assess corruption risks in each individual development project as well as the overall risk of corruption more generally.

The private sector is an important actor in the value chain. Norway's Transparency Act<sup>22</sup> requires larger enterprises to carry out **due diligence assessments** of the state of fundamental human rights and decent working conditions in their own organisations, among their business partners and throughout their supply chains.<sup>23</sup> Safeguarding human rights and decent working conditions is essential to sustainable value creation and the achievement of many of the SDGs.



<sup>22</sup> Transparency Act (Act relating to enterprises' transparency and work on fundamental human rights and decent working conditions), LOV-2021-06-18-99, Lovdata, <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2021-06-18-99>

<sup>23</sup> Regjeringen.no (2021) 'Ansvarlig Næringsliv', article on Norwegian Government website, last updated 16 Nov. 2021, [Ansvarlig næringsliv - regjeringen.no](https://www.regjeringen.no)

## Role of women in food production

At least 150 million more women than men experienced food insecurity in 2021,<sup>24</sup> and this gender gap is increasing.<sup>25</sup> Crises have a particularly severe impact on women and girls.

Women and girls around the world face a wide variety of gender-related challenges. Discrimination may be the result of cultural norms and practices – or be embedded in laws and regulations that affect their access to food and their opportunity to breastfeed or to produce food.

At the global level, women represent 43 % of the agricultural workforce in developing countries – and 50 % in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>26</sup> Of those employed globally in fishing and aquaculture, 21 % are women, a proportion that rises to more than 50 % when the rest of the value chain is included.<sup>27</sup> Given the lack of data on women's participation in the food production sector, the true figure is probably higher.<sup>28</sup> Women play a number of key roles in the food production chain, from processing and sales to cooking and distribution in households. Nevertheless, the role women play in the value chain is less recognised than that of men. By increasing the focus on women, we will help to improve food security and nutrition for people in rural areas of developing countries.

The constraints limiting women's access to productive resources and services (such as land, credit and other farm inputs) lead to lower production. In 2010, FAO estimated that yields could be 20–30 % higher if women had equal access to such resources and services. Gender equality for women smallholders could potentially reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12–17 %.<sup>29</sup>

Not all measures directed at small-scale food producers will automatically benefit women. Norway will seek to ensure that women are consulted and allowed to participate on an equal footing with men in the planning and implementation of projects. We will also work to ensure that all our partners have insight into how the various measures affect both women and men. Substantiating data and reporting on gender impacts will be required.

We will also invest in targeted measures that strengthen women's position as food producers.

Breastfeeding is one of the most effective means of promoting health and preventing disease in children and mothers alike.<sup>30</sup> Breastfeeding is sustainable food production that contributes to food security and progress towards multiple SDGs. It is crucial to follow WHO's International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes.<sup>31</sup> We will work to include breastfeeding information in nutritional and food security guidelines.

<sup>24</sup> Bryan, E., Ringler, C. and Lefore, N. (2022) *To Ease the World Food Crisis, Focus Resources on Women and Girls*. Nature 609: 28-31. [To ease the world food crisis, focus resources on women and girls \(nature.com\)](https://www.nature.com)

<sup>25</sup> FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (2022) *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022: Repurposing food and agricultural policies to make healthy diets more affordable*, Rome, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022* (fao.org)<https://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/2022/en/><https://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/2022/en/>

<sup>26</sup> FAO (2011) *The State of Food and Agriculture: Women in Agriculture: Closing the gender gap for development*, Rome, [i2050e.pdf \(fao.org\)](https://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/2011/en/)

<sup>27</sup> FAO (2022) *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022: Towards Blue Transformation*, Rome, [The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022 \(fao.org\)](https://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/2022/en/)

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., footnote 26

<sup>30</sup> Victora CG, Bahl R, Barros AJ, Franca GV, Horton S, Krasevec J, et al., 'Breastfeeding in the 21st century: epidemiology, mechanisms, and lifelong effect', *Lancet*, 2016;387(10017):475-90.

<sup>31</sup> World Health Organization (1981) *International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes*, <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/40382>

## Role of persons with disabilities

Climate change, environmental degradation and reduced food security have particularly severe impacts on persons with disabilities. Because of physical, economic and social barriers, including stigma, persons with disabilities have fewer opportunities than others to take part in food production. The situation for disabled women is especially difficult. Norway will work to ensure that the right of disabled persons and their households to safe, nutritious food is fulfilled, and that all people are able to participate in food production on an equal basis.

We will work with our partners to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Norwegian-funded programmes.

## Role of youth and young adults

One characteristic of populations in developing countries is the high proportion of young people. In Africa, between 10 and 12 million young adults are ready to enter the workforce each year, while the number of new jobs created annually is just over 3 million.<sup>32</sup> This means that the opportunities many young people seek for the future will not be available. It is also the case that many young people do not want to take up work in small-scale food production. Active efforts will be needed to make food production more attractive to young people, including investment and support for job creation in the food sector, in order to make use of this valuable source of labour and promote economic growth.

Norway will work to ensure that youth and young adults are consulted and included in processes that affect them and their futures.



<sup>32</sup> African Development Bank Group (2016) 'Jobs for Youth in Africa: Catalyzing youth opportunity across Africa', Abidjan, AfDBG, [Job youth Africa \(afdb.org\)](http://afdb.org)

## Part III: Implementation



This strategy has four main priorities:

- **improved productivity, including reduced production loss, for small-scale food producers;**
- **well-functioning local value chains and markets that strengthen the position of small-scale food producers in the value chain and accommodate small and medium-sized enterprises;**
- **improved access to food that is healthy, varied and safe;**
- **preventive action and rapid, integrated response efforts.**

These priorities form the basis for determining which activities Norway will support in order to achieve the objectives set out in this strategy.

### Areas of focus

#### Productivity and production loss

**Food production must be sustainable and climate-resilient.** We will:

- promote production methods that are adapted to a changing climate, and that take into account the effects on both the climate and the environment;
- prioritise support for sound agronomic and agroecological approaches that promote soil quality, soil health and long-term sustainable use of agricultural land;
- strengthen advisory services as well as plant health, animal health and veterinary services, with a focus on the One Health approach and on antimicrobial resistance and the use of antimicrobial agents (see Box 4);
- promote innovation that helps to raise climate-resilient productivity in agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture in developing countries;
- contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from food production.

**BOX 4:**

**One Health and the multilateral system**

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have entered into an agreement to strengthen cooperation on the One Health approach in order to balance and optimise human, animal and plant health in a sustainable way. These four organisations are equal partners in the One Health collaboration. The agreement provides a legal and formal framework for the organisations to work in a coordinated and integrated manner at the interface between people, animals, plants and ecosystems. An important aspect of their work is to prevent antimicrobial resistance by reducing use of antimicrobial agents such as antibiotics.

**Input factors such as seed, fertiliser, soil health and animal feed are essential to increased productivity.** We will:

- take political leadership to facilitate small-scale farmers' access to fertilisers, efficient use of fertilisers and knowledge of other measures to improve soil health;
- strengthen public-private cooperation, including with the involvement of multilateral partners that help to improve access to input factors relevant to the farmers' various needs;
- strengthen local seed systems and promote seed variety development so that small-scale farmers gain wider access to high-quality seeds, and strengthen farmers' rights for example by continuing the Norwegian initiative on smallholders' access to the seed system presented at the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021;
- make the Svalbard Global Seed Vault a central component in Norway's efforts to enhance global food security;
- help to improve plant breeding, livestock breeding and genetic diversity management in small-scale production in order to increase knowledge of and access to a greater diversity of climate-resilient varieties and species;
- strengthen efforts to reduce health and environmental risks linked to the use of chemical pesticides, in part by emphasising the importance of integrated plant protection and alternative methods.

**Food loss from small-scale food production must be reduced.** We will:

- support measures that spread knowledge, including via digital solutions for mobile phones, about plant and animal health and the best ways to treat diseases and pests;
- work with partners to ensure that advisory services provide information about food loss and measures to minimise it;
- help to enhance knowledge about climate-resilient production, in order to reduce food loss due to climate change.

**Aquatic food is crucial to future food security.**

We will:

- heighten awareness at the international level of the oceans as an important food source and of their role in contributing to sustainable food systems and food security;
- help enable small-scale fishers to earn a sustainable profit and to continue to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing;
- continue to strengthen fisheries, aquaculture and integrated ocean management in partner countries, including through the Knowledge Bank's *Fish for Development* and *Oceans for Development* programmes;
- help to ensure that resource management is based on updated knowledge, for example through the FAO's Nansen Programme and the High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (see Boxes 2 and 3);
- strengthen Norway's efforts to improve small-scale aquaculture and related value chains by increasing cooperation with and the involvement of Norwegian businesses and specialist communities.

**In our efforts in this area, Norway will promote the rights and opportunities of women small-scale food producers.** Among other things, we will support changes in the business and regulatory framework as it relates to women and their access to key resources, with a special focus on input factors, financing and applicable technology.

**Norway will continue to support knowledge development.** Among other things, we will support research at universities and research institutions in partner countries and through the International Consortium of Agricultural Research Centres (CGIAR).

## Value chains and markets

### Norway will work to strengthen participation by small-scale producers in the food value chain.

We will:

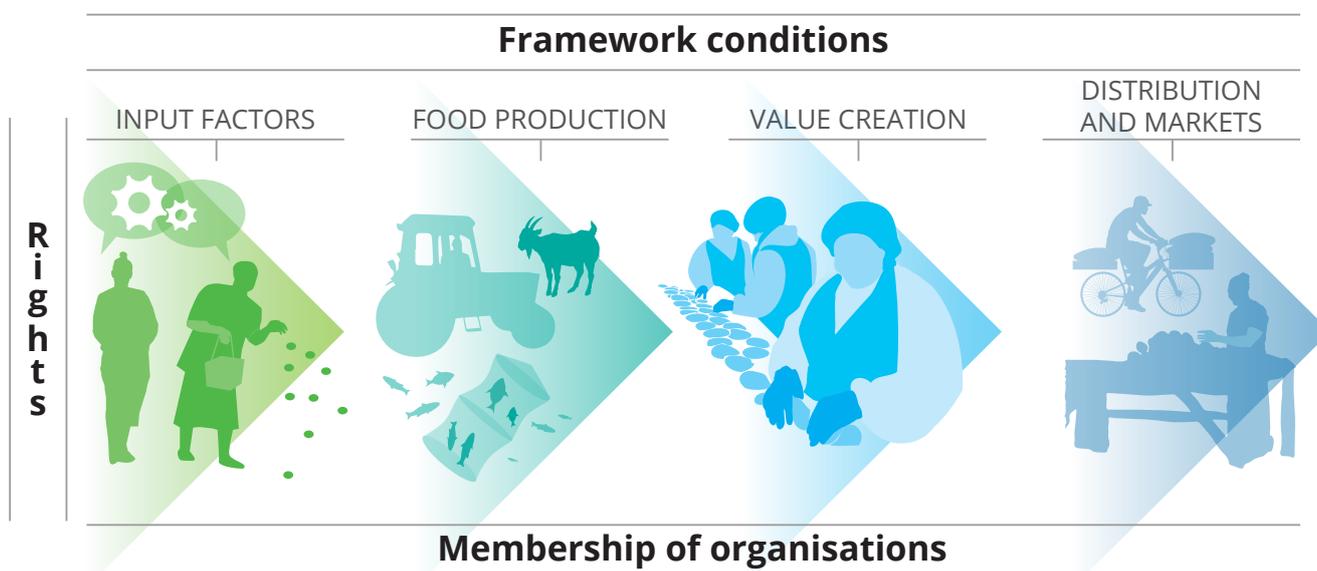
- help to increase knowledge about and access to technology and processing systems;
- seek to facilitate effective financing arrangements for small and medium-sized enterprises whose harvests and catches contribute to local and regional economic growth;
- facilitate innovation and financing that encourages local job creation related to small-scale food production and processing;
- support measures to improve information flow between segments of the value chain; facilitate food market development through digital tools that convey basic market information; and organise producer collaborations and cooperatives that increase the profit potential of food producers;
- help to strengthen the market position of small-scale producers in the face of unscrupulous commercial practices and other challenges;
- facilitate renewable energy use in the value chains in order to boost climate resilience;
- participate in other initiatives that help to reduce the climate and environmental footprint of local food value chains.

### Membership of cooperatives and organisation as producer-owned businesses can help to increase income, market stability and economic growth.

We will:

- support the development of organisations for small-scale producers such as farmers' and fishers' organisations or cooperatives and group purchasing networks, within the framework of national legislation. The Agriculture for Development programme is particularly relevant in this context.
- support and contribute to efforts to establish women-led cooperatives or farmers' and fishers' organisations.
- promote social dialogue that encourages participation, co-determination and business and regulatory practices beneficial to small-scale producers. This is an important part of an effective human rights-based approach. Farmers' organisations, for example, can serve both as the voice of farmers in dialogue with authorities and donors and as a disseminator of knowledge among farmers about suitable cultivation methods and other agricultural issues.

## Value chains in the context of this strategy



**Farmers are self-employed, so private investment in agriculture is crucial to food security.** We will:

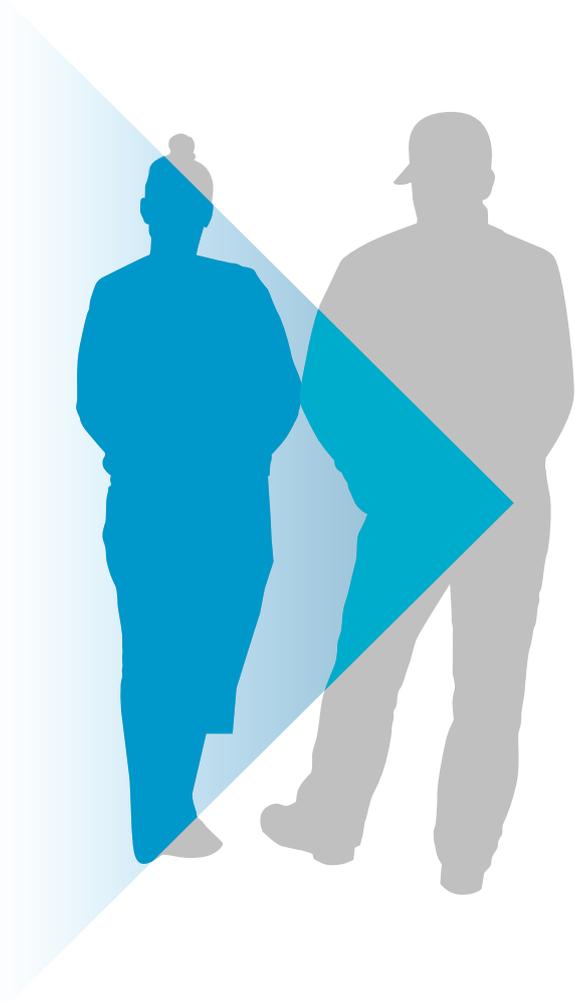
- seek to ensure that development assistance is used as a catalyst to mobilise private capital;
- strengthen instruments that facilitate business development and targeted efforts through risk-reduction measures to increase sustainable commercial investments in the food sector, including through Norfund (see Box 5);
- facilitate the use of Norwegian agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture technology and expertise in local food production and processing where appropriate and if there is an interest in this at the local level;
- encourage more effective public-private cooperation, including by supporting a public-private partnership for soil mapping in developing countries on open access digital platforms to promote more efficient fertiliser selection, better soil health and regenerative agriculture.

**BOX 5:**

**Norfund's agriculture investments**

Norfund, the Norwegian Investment Fund for developing countries, invests in food production and agriculture, among other sectors. Successful agriculture investment helps to combat poverty by creating jobs, boosting incomes, promoting climate change adaptation and enhancing food security. Agriculture is a demanding sector where risk is high and financial returns are often limited. There is therefore a great need for more risk capital than is available in the market.

**By investing directly in companies that produce and process food,** Norfund helps to increase production efficiency and ease access to local and/or export markets. Combining a partner company's own production with contract cultivation by smallholders often leads to more secure market access. In recent years, Norfund has increased investments in companies that create markets for small-scale farmers and fish farmers. Norfund also reaches smaller companies **through fund investments.** Local fund managers have closer contact with smallholders than Norfund itself is able to have. They can also provide **loans to small-scale farmers.** This enables the farmers to invest in anything from new tools and seed varieties to artificial fertilisers and irrigation systems, thereby increasing their productivity and making production more climate-resilient. Through its ownership stakes and its lending to banks and microfinance institutions, Norfund helps to promote the development of agriculture-oriented loan products.



## Malnutrition and undernutrition

**It is important to increase knowledge about varied and nutritionally appropriate food production.** This is in line with the Rome Declaration on Nutrition<sup>33</sup> and the UN's Decade of Action on Nutrition.<sup>34</sup> Norway will contribute to these efforts, for example through local advisory services. Ensuring that small-scale producers can produce enough safe and healthy food will enhance household nutrition and the availability of more nutritious food in markets.

**Increased consumption of aquatic food** will contribute to improved nutrition and food security in general.<sup>35</sup> We will work actively to increase consumption of locally caught and produced aquatic food, in part through Norway's leadership role in the *Global Action Network for Sustainable Food from the Oceans and Inland Waters for Food Security and Nutrition*.

**Increased food safety is important to improve nutrition.** There is a pressing need to establish and update food safety regulations in developing countries. Norway will use instruments such as the *Agriculture for Development programme* to promote stricter regulations and stronger national food safety agencies.

## Women play a key role in ensuring good nutrition

for young children and the rest of the household. Women can break the pattern of malnutrition that is often passed down through generations. Although the main problem in developing countries is a lack of sufficient and nutritious food, the challenge increasingly has more to do with unhealthy diets. We will therefore work to ensure that our partners include information on breastfeeding and nutritionally appropriate food in their activities.

**Social safety nets are important to improve nutrition** among the most vulnerable groups. Norway will strengthen social safety nets such as nutritional measures targeting children, including children with disabilities. We will also continue to support locally produced school meal programmes (see Box 6). School meal programmes receiving Norwegian support are also to provide information and education about a healthy diet. In addition, social safety net measures can help to create local demand for varied and healthy food products.



<sup>33</sup> FAO og WHO (2014) Second international conference on nutrition, Rome, 19-21 November 2024, Conference outcome document: Rome Declaration on nutrition, FAO. [ml542e.pdf \(fao.org\)](https://www.fao.org/3/mt542e.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> [Decade of Action on Nutrition | \(un.org\)](https://www.un.org/development/dha/decade-of-action-on-nutrition/)

<sup>35</sup> HLPE (2014) 'Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and nutrition', a report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome.

**Children and adults with disabilities** and other marginalised people are particularly affected by food insecurity. Moreover, inadequate access to sufficient and healthy food can lead to malnutrition and potentially to growth stunting and other impairments. Our efforts to combat malnutrition and undernutrition should be designed to ensure the inclusion of these groups. We will also try to reduce stunting among children by continuing to support the development of national nutrition plans.

**Nutrition requires cross-sectoral approaches.**

Food security and safety; human, animal and plant health; gender equality and education are all important in enhancing nutrition. We will therefore strengthen coordination between our efforts to combat malnutrition and undernutrition on the one hand and our work to promote global health and better national health systems on the other.

**Harmful air pollution from cooking must be reduced.**

We will continue to support measures to replace the use of highly polluting traditional ovens and open fires for cooking. We will view measures in this area in conjunction with our health and renewable energy efforts.

**BOX 6:**

**Social safety nets**

Social safety nets are schemes designed to help improve living conditions and reduce economic and social vulnerability. They are essential instruments in long-term development and poverty-reduction strategies and are also vital in preventive and early-stage action and crisis response.

In the food security context, social safety nets have a role to play in food production and nutrition as well as in wider, integrated efforts. Numerous studies show that social safety nets can enhance food access, food stability and food consumption. **Cash payments** are an element of some social safety nets, and studies show that such payments can be effective in combating hunger and food insecurity.<sup>36 37</sup>

**School meal programmes** are a form of social safety net that is particularly valuable to poor and vulnerable children and families. Such programmes improve outcomes related to children's learning, nutrition and health:<sup>38</sup>

- When children receive a regular nutritious meal at school, it helps to prevent malnutrition and undernutrition.
- School meals result in greater school participation and in more children starting and continuing school. This is particularly important for girls, who are often the first to be taken out of school. Better nutrition can also lead to better learning outcomes.
- School meals help to maintain stability and enhance resilience during and after crises, and are particularly important for girls and for children with disabilities.<sup>39</sup> The pandemic showed how dependent many children are on the food they receive at school. When schools shut down, children lost out on more than tuition and adult supervision. Many of them also lost their only meal of the day.
- School meal programmes serving locally produced food provide local food producers with a steady market for their products, resulting in stable income, more investment and higher productivity. Such programmes also promote nutrition, education and better eating habits while encouraging more diversified food production with an emphasis on local crops that are more climate-resilient.

<sup>36</sup> FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (2022) *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022: Repurposing food and agricultural policies to make healthy diets more affordable*, Rome, The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022 (fao.org)

<sup>37</sup> FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (2018) *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018: Building climate resilience for food security and nutrition*, Rome, The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018 (fao.org)

<sup>38</sup> Aurino, E., Gelli, A., Adamba, C., Osei-Akoto, I. og Alderman, H. (2020) *Food for Thought? Experimental Evidence on the Learning Impacts of a Large-Scale School Feeding Program*. Journal of Human Resources.

Food for thought? Experimental Evidence on the Learning Impacts of a Large-Scale School Feeding Program (uwpress.org)

<sup>39</sup> ECW (2022) 'Achieving Results: A New Way of Working', Strategic Plan 2023-2026, New York, [f\\_ecw1016\\_strategic\\_report.pdf](#) (educationcannotwait.org)

## Preventive action and integrated food security efforts

**Food security is affected by the political and environmental situation.** Much of the work described in this strategy will take place in countries that are especially at risk – countries affected by both conflict and climate change, such as South Sudan, or particularly vulnerable to climate change, such as Malawi. We will therefore adapt the use of instruments and choice of partners to the context.

**Better coherence between humanitarian action and long-term assistance is needed.** Norway will increase coherence in its own efforts and actively promote coordination internationally. Norway will also push for better interaction between UN organisations and the multilateral development banks to achieve synergies between humanitarian response and long-term development efforts. While humanitarian action is intended to save lives and alleviate suffering in accordance with the humanitarian principles, long-term development and peace efforts address the fundamental causes of conflict and vulnerability and are therefore a crucial factor in reducing humanitarian needs over time (see Box 7). Humanitarian efforts must do more, where possible, to support long-term food production and local suppliers.

### BOX 7:

#### Integrated efforts

Food assistance and measures to combat hunger account for a considerable part of Norwegian humanitarian assistance. Much of this support is channelled through the World Food Programme (WFP), which increasingly views humanitarian food assistance in conjunction with country-level preventive action and resilience-building measures and seeks to purchase food commodities and food from local producers. In 2021, WFP purchased 117 000 tonnes of food and food commodities from small-scale farmers in 27 countries – three times as much as in 2019.

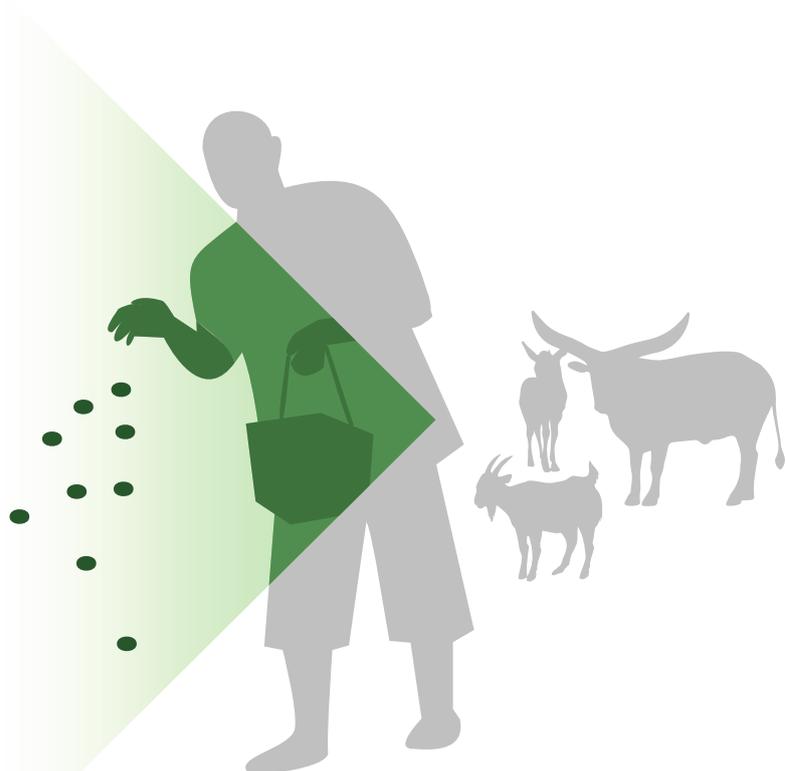
Since 2014, WFP has collaborated with authorities, businesses, academia and local organisations on a comprehensive resilience-building programme for 2 000 villages in Niger. The programme reaches 1.8 million food-insecure people. This is leading to better utilisation of agricultural land, composting, forecasting services, climate adaptation and local market access, and increased food production and livelihoods. In 2022, when Niger was hit by the largest hunger crisis in decades, 80 % of villages participating in the programme got through it without humanitarian assistance, contrasting starkly with villages in the same areas that did not participate. About 500 000 people in Niger avoided a hunger crisis in 2022 thanks to this programme.

#### We will increase synergies across various instruments.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is consolidating the formal responsibility for Norway's cooperation with the UN's three main food security organisations – FAO, IFAD and WFP – under the Minister of International Development. This will facilitate even better coordination and synergy in the field of food security.

#### Quick decisions and coordination with humanitarian efforts are essential.

When dealing with humanitarian hunger crises, it is important to be able to quickly implement measures to promote food security in the long term. Examples include the provision of appropriate seed, animal feed, veterinary services etc. so that local food production can continue and reduce the scale of future humanitarian crises.



To this end, funds allocated to the food security budget have been set aside for food security-related measures in connection with humanitarian responses. The Ministry will decide on the allocation of these funds, which will be managed by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

**The ability to anticipate hunger crises and act early is crucial.** Most hunger crises have clear warning signs, and much can be achieved through preventive and early-stage action. Norway will help to prevent hunger catastrophes and hunger crises by strengthening early warning and early action mechanisms.

**Prevention, preparedness and early response are crucial to reducing the consequences of hunger crises.** Weather forecasting systems can be used to develop scenario analysis methods and other ways of predicting future crises and their possible effects.

## Partners

**Civil society organisations** often work directly with food producers and are therefore a key channel for providing assistance to the producers. In many cases, they can serve as implementing partners for multilateral organisations and are able to reach people in areas that other actors cannot. Norway provides support to both Norwegian and international civil society organisations. Several have a presence or sister organisations in countries identified by Norway as partner countries and/or priority countries, and some have separate agreements with Norwegian diplomatic missions.

**Farmers' organisations and fishers' organisations** play several important roles. They are interest groups that represent small-scale producers in dealings with public authorities and other actors while providing producers with business and technical advice as well as bargaining power. Producer organisations and cooperatives play a key role in strengthening the position of their members in the value chain.

**The private sector** plays an instrumental role in the food production value chains. Private companies supply the input factors that food producers need and are involved in the processing and marketing of their goods. While the suppliers of inputs such as seed, pesticides, fertilisers, animal feed, vaccines and various kinds of infrastructure are often large international companies, the chain down to the producer level may consist of national or local actors.

In developing countries, the value chain consists mostly of small and medium-sized local companies. Development cooperation that incorporates the private sector can help to improve the framework for food production and food sales.

**Norway's diplomatic missions** play an important role in promoting policy and dialogue with national authorities and multilateral organisations. The missions also have contact with local civil society representatives, farmers' and fishers' organisations, cooperatives, businesses and academic institutions. Norwegian embassies will play a major role in implementing the strategy and helping to achieve results on the ground in Norway's designated priority countries and in other partner countries where Norway is working to promote food security.

Through its cooperation with **multilateral partners**, Norway is part of a global community that can work together to implement a common, concerted effort. The UN and the development banks are knowledge centres that contribute to policy development and maintain close dialogue with national authorities. UN organisations also play a key role in maintaining important global norms and standards. The most important organisations that deal primarily with food security are the three UN organisations based in Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP (see Box 8). The World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are other UN organisations that address nutrition and food security issues within their mandates.

The multilateral development banks are responsible for much of the collective international effort on food security in developing countries. The World Bank's fund for the poorest countries (the International Development Association) supports regional and country-specific agricultural projects, social safety nets and other projects that affect food security. On the African continent, the African Development Bank and organisations under the aegis of the African Union (AU) are important partners.

Norway also supports major efforts through its contributions to a number of global funds, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program under the World Bank (GAFSP) and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF).

**BOX 8:****UN food organisations headquartered in Rome**

**FAO** – *the UN Food and Agriculture Organization* – works to improve nutrition, increase productivity and sustainability in agriculture and fisheries, raise the standard of living in rural areas and boost global economic growth. FAO's primary activity is to establish norms by developing guidelines and standards for all countries of the world and helping countries to implement knowledge-based national policies. The organisation has about 125 country offices and implements programmes in cooperation with national food security authorities. FAO also plays a role in humanitarian situations, assisting with seed, fodder or other necessities to keep food production going when war or natural disasters strike.

**IFAD** – *the International Fund for Agricultural Development* – helps to improve food security, nutrition and incomes for rural people in low- and middle-income countries. IFAD provides both lending and donor assistance to national authorities to carry out agricultural development projects. The organisation has a clear focus on the poorest and most vulnerable countries and populations.

**WFP** – *the World Food Programme* – seeks to save lives and change lives by providing food assistance and helping local communities and national authorities to build capacity to improve resilience. WFP is the world's largest humanitarian organisation. Its mandate covers both humanitarian action and long-term development. About 80 % of WFP's resources go towards humanitarian responses, while 20 % is spent on building resilience and addressing the underlying causes of hunger.

**CFS** – *the UN Committee on World Food Security* – is a key policy development forum and meeting place for representatives of civil society, business and industry, multilateral organisations and research institutions. The CFS, whose secretariat is hosted by FAO, develops voluntary policy guidelines in areas such as the right to food, land rights, agricultural systems, fisheries management and sustainable food systems.

**The public sector** in developing countries is of central importance. Public authorities create the business and regulatory framework for the food sector and decide on other political issues as well. Through the Knowledge Bank (see Box 3), Norwegian public institutions and expert groups offer to share their knowledge and experience with public partners in the countries Norway works with.

**Academic** and research institutions in Norway and in developing countries are generating new knowledge of relevance to the implementation of this strategy. As part of its aid efforts, Norway has maintained partnership programmes between Norwegian and foreign universities, including agricultural universities, for more than 50 years. CGIAR and other key agricultural research institutions contribute to the knowledge base that underpins policy development in food security, agriculture, fisheries and forestry. CGIAR research centres have branches in several countries and contribute to the development and dissemination of scientific breakthroughs and innovations.



## Part IV: Combining forces against hunger



This strategy sets out the Government's priorities in the effort to promote food security in the context of Norwegian development policy. Norway alone cannot bring an end to hunger, but we will target our efforts towards areas where we have advantages and can help to ensure that more people have sufficient access to safe, healthy food. The strategy's key action points are listed below.

### The Government will:

- **Take a leading role internationally to promote food security, and increase national food self-sufficiency and national food sovereignty, while enhancing the role of small-scale producers in strengthening sustainable food systems.** In our multilateral engagement, we will draw international political attention to the issue of food security, mobilise resources, and promote the strategy's objectives.
- **Focus on small-scale food producers.** We will encourage farm smallholders, small-scale fishers and aquatic food producers to become members of organisations or cooperatives, and improve their access to the input factors and technology needed to cope with climate change. We will also seek to strengthen value chains serving local markets.

- **Promote climate-resilient food production, including nature-based solutions for carbon capture and sequestration.** Small-scale farmers, fishers and aquatic food producers must have access to knowledge about climate adaptation, genetic resources and technology so that they can continue food production despite changing climatic conditions.
- **Take a human rights-based approach.** We will work to enable rights holders to claim their rights and the authorities to uphold those rights, including the right to food.
- **Strengthen the position of women as food producers and participants elsewhere in the value chains and food systems.** We will require our partners to give adequate consideration to gender equality, and to report on the effects of the measures implemented under the strategy on both women and men.
- **Have a global perspective but target efforts towards sub-Saharan Africa.** We will focus on the designated priority countries, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, South Sudan and Tanzania, and strengthen expertise on food security in Africa and at our embassies in these five countries. We will intensify political dialogue with the governments, the UN and the development banks in these priority countries. In implementing the strategy, we will also attach importance to other partner countries facing food insecurity.
- **Enhance value creation and business development.** We will strengthen local value chains, so that any surplus produced can be sold in local markets. We will facilitate private investment that would otherwise not occur due to high risk, making use of instruments such as Norfund's agricultural investments, Norad's grant programmes and the development banks' risk-reducing measures.
- **Cooperate more systematically with civil society and with farmers' and fishers' organisations.** We will set aside funds to enable Norwegian and international civil society organisations to follow up the objectives set out in the strategy.
- **Bring together Norwegian expertise that is in demand.** Under the Agriculture for Development programme, we will work to improve business and regulatory frameworks, develop expertise and strengthen the knowledge base in selected countries. The Fish for Development programme and other relevant Knowledge Bank programmes will also be important in this context.
- **Support the development of digital solutions and relevant technology.** We will, among other things, seek to improve the quality and accessibility of systems for weather forecasting and analyses relating to markets, soil, and animal and plant health.
- **Strengthen social safety nets.** We will promote increased use of cash transfers and support programmes for locally produced school meals that improve nutrition.
- **Prevent hunger crises.** We will strengthen early warning mechanisms. We will promote innovative financing models such as forecast-based financing and insurance. Such approaches can ensure timely and predictable payouts to small-scale food producers in the event of damage from extreme weather or other causes.
- **Consolidate food security efforts.** Within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we will consolidate responsibility for cooperation with all UN food security organisations, by assigning formal responsibility for cooperation with the World Food Programme (WFP) to the Minister of International Development.
- **Strengthen rapid, integrated food security efforts.** We will facilitate effective coordination of humanitarian action and long-term development assistance. We will set aside funds so that we can respond rapidly and in an integrated manner to avert forecasted hunger crises. We will encourage humanitarian actors to support long-term food production and local suppliers wherever possible.
- **Maintain dialogue on implementation of the strategy with civil society, farmers' and fishers' organisations, business and industry, and academia.** The Minister of International Development has set up a dedicated dialogue forum for regular discussions about implementation of the strategy and related topics.
- **Strengthen cooperation between ministries.** We will regularly bring together the relevant ministries to discuss implementation of this strategy, with a view to ensuring coordination between Norwegian intergovernmental cooperation and development policy.

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