It is time to rethink how we grow, share and consume our food. If done right, agriculture, forestry and fisheries can provide nutritious food for all and generate decent incomes, while supporting people-centered rural development and protecting the environment.

Right now, our soils, freshwater, oceans, forests and biodiversity are being rapidly degraded. Climate change is putting even more pressure on the resources we depend on, increasing risks associated with disasters, such as droughts and floods. Many rural women and men can no longer make ends meet on their land, forcing them to migrate to cities in search of opportunities. Poor food security is also causing millions of children to be stunted, or too short for the ages, due to severe malnutrition.

A profound change of the global food and agriculture system is needed if we are to nourish the 815 million people who are hungry today and the additional 2 billion people expected to be undernourished by 2050. Investments in agriculture are crucial to increasing the capacity for agricultural productivity and sustainable food production systems are necessary to help alleviate the perils of hunger.

**Hunger**

An estimated 821 million people were undernourished in 2017.

The majority of the world’s hungry people live in developing countries, where 12.9 per cent of the population is undernourished.

Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region with the highest prevalence of hunger, with the rate increasing from 20.7 per cent in 2014 to 23.2 per cent in 2017.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of undernourished people increased from 195 million in 2014 to 237 million in 2017.

Poor nutrition causes nearly half (45 per cent) of deaths in children under five – 3.1 million children each year.

149 million children under 5 years of age—22 per cent of the global under-5 population—were still chronically undernourished in 2018.

**Food security**

Agriculture is the single largest employer in the world, providing livelihoods for 40 per cent of today’s global population. It is the largest source of income and jobs for poor rural households.

500 million small farms worldwide, most still rainfed, provide up to 80 per cent of food consumed in a large part of the developing world. Investing in smallholder women and men is an important way to increase food security and nutrition for the poorest, as well as food production for local and global markets.

Since the 1900s, some 75 per cent of crop diversity has been lost from farmers’ fields. Better use of agricultural biodiversity can contribute to more nutritious diets, enhanced livelihoods for farming communities and more resilient and sustainable farming systems.

If women farmers had the same access to resources as men, the number of hungry in the world could be reduced by up to 150 million.

840 million people have no access to electricity worldwide – most of whom live in rural areas of the developing world. Energy poverty in many regions is a fundamental barrier to reducing hunger and ensuring that the world can produce enough food to meet future demand.

By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.

By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons.

By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.

By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.

By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed.

Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries.

Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round.

Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility.

Hunger is on the rise again globally and undernutrition continues to affect millions of children. Public investment in agriculture globally is declining, smallscale food producers and family farmers require much greater support and increased investment in infrastructure and technology for sustainable agriculture is urgently needed.

An estimated 821 million people – approximately 1 in 9 people in the world – were undernourished in 2017, up from 784 million in 2015. This represents a worrying rise in world hunger for a third consecutive year after a prolonged decline. Africa remains the continent with the highest prevalence of undernourishment, affecting one fifth of its population (more than 256 million people). Consistent with the continued growth in undernourishment, 770 million people faced severe food insecurity in 2017.

Stunting has been decreasing in nearly every region since 2000. Still, more than 1 in 5 children under 5 years of age (149 million) were stunted in 2018. Globally, 49 million children under 5 were affected by wasting and another 40 million were overweight in 2018.

Strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacity of small-scale and family farmers, whose productivity is systematically lower than all other food producers, is critical to reversing the trend of the rise in hunger. The share of small-scale food producers in terms of all food producers in countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America ranges from 40 to 85 per cent, compared with fewer than 10 per cent in Europe.

Government spending on agriculture compared to agriculture’s contribution to the total economy has declined by 37 per cent; the ratio fell from 0.42 in 2001 to 0.26 worldwide in 2017. In addition, aid to agriculture in developing countries fell from nearly 25 per cent of all donors’ sector-allocable aid in the mid-1980s to only 5 per cent in 2017, representing a decrease of $12.6 billion.

A continuous downward trend has been observed in export subsidy outlays reported to the World Trade Organization (WTO). The total outlays fell from close to $500 million in 2010 to around $120 million in 2016. This reduction in export subsidies by Governments is leading to lower distortions in agricultural markets.