



Why Nutrition is Key to Ending Hunger Sustainably

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Moderator: Francine Picard-Mukazi, Director of Partnerships, Shamba Center for Food & Climate

Organized by: FAO, ATLAS, Shamba Center for Food & Climate, BMZ, CABI, Gates Foundation, Hesat2030, Paris Peace Forum, SDG2 Advocacy Hub, and the Zero Hunger Coalition

Speakers: **Gaëtan RAMINDO**, Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty of Madagascar; **Jean Baptiste Boulay**, Executive Vice-President of Nutrition Solutions Business Unit, OCP Nutricrops; **Dr. Andreas Schaumayer**, Head of Division, “Food and Nutrition Security, Fisheries, BMZ; **Carin Smaller**, Executive Director, Shamba Centre for Food & Climate; **David Laborde**, Director, Agrifood Economics Division, FAO; **Lillian Kapusana**, Permanent Secretary to the Vice President of the Republic of Zambia; **Ammad Bahalim**, Senior Program Officer, Gates Foundation.

Decades of agricultural development have successfully increased food availability, but this progress has been driven largely by scaling up calories rather than nutrition. While hunger has declined, other forms of malnutrition, such as overweight and obesity are skyrocketing, and current food production has generated negative environmental impacts.. A new Hesat2030 report, based on a synthesis of 1,732 studies across 83 countries published in the past 20 years, makes the case that the agricultural development community must now engage differently: not by producing more food, but by making food systems deliver nutritious, diverse, sustainable and affordable diets. The challenge is no longer scarcity but rather quality and access.

Ten high-impact interventions and the evidence base to prioritise them

The Hesat2030 report identifies ten nutrition-sensitive interventions in agrifood systems grouped across three levels: production (1. diversification toward fruits, vegetables, pulses, including agroecology, 2. sustainable aquaculture and livestock, 3. home gardens, 4. biofortification), markets (5. storage, distribution, processing and trade infrastructure, 6. food fortification, 7. food safety), and consumption (8. shifting and influencing diet choices, nutritious school meals, and. 10. food vouchers and cash transfers). It finds that interventions work best when bundled together For example, providing inputs or livestock without guidance on food preparation rarely improves dietary outcomes. The evidence is clear: strategic bundling multiplies positive outcomes and reduces costs.

The report notes that nutrition must be treated as an intentional outcome of agricultural investment at the time of programme design rather than addressed only through diet and consumer access.



80% of agricultural ODA has no nutrition objective — a major opportunity for reorientation

Of the \$15–20 billion in annual ODA directed toward agriculture and food security, 80% lack a nutrition objective when screened against the OECD nutrition policy marker. This is not a resource gap but rather an alignment gap. Integrating nutrition into existing agricultural portfolios, without necessarily increasing overall spending, could unlock significant gains. However, aid can no longer serve as a gap filler and should be used to catalyze larger resources flows from domestic public and private sectors. Blended finance offers such a pathway, with promising mechanisms already in use: blended funds providing loans to nutrition-focused SMEs, social impact bonds for maternal and child health, nutrition-sensitive public procurement standards, and development impact bonds that pay investors based on verified reductions in stunting and micronutrient deficiencies.

A systems lens: agri-food transformation requires a holistic, cross-sectoral approach

The inadequacy of siloed responses to interconnected challenges was a recurring theme. As noted during the session, the world is simultaneously navigating climate shocks, rising inequality, and a nutrition transition; agri-food systems are uniquely positioned to address all of these challenges simultaneously, provided we resist ultra-specialised, single-issue solutions. The One Health framework anchoring this event reflects the same rationale: human, animal, plant, and environmental health are deeply interconnected, and durable progress requires approaches that bring all dimensions together.

Evidence must translate into policy choices and investment decisions

The session's speakers agreed: the sector is not short of evidence, strategies, or commitments. Rather, it is missing the translation of evidence into how systems are designed, prioritised, and financed. The Hesat2030 nutrition report was framed not as a conclusion but as a practical tool for governments and donors as they invest in nutrition-sensitive agrifood programmes in low income countries. The session was closed by underscoring how a systems-based approach aligned with One Health principles can support effective delivery even in today's constrained geopolitical context. The evidence exists, and action must become the priority.

Speakers' key contributions

BMZ (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) | In a context of shrinking ODA and recurring crises, structural, evidence-based policies must be protected rather than abandoned. Food systems currently generate over \$8 trillion in negative externalities annually; addressing this requires long-term commitment despite geopolitical pressure.



FAO | Agri-food systems must deliver simultaneously on income, health, sustainability, and inclusion. Interventions will only succeed if the underlying economics are viable: farmers will diversify or adopt new models only if price incentives are aligned, financing is available, and practical knowledge is accessible.

Shamba Centre for Food & Climate | The ten identified interventions are not standalone solutions but form a mutually reinforcing system. Bundling across production, markets, and consumption levels is what drives impact. Nutrition education in particular acts as an enabler for nearly all other interventions.

OCP Nutricrops | Nutrition must be treated as an intentional outcome of agricultural investment from the outset, starting at the level of soils and crops. The science to boost nutrient density at the farm level already exists; the missing link is greater alignment between agronomy, policy, and finance.

Gates Foundation | The main obstacle is not a funding gap but a design gap. If nutrition is not embedded into agricultural investments from the start and reinforced through tools like nutrition-sensitive procurement and blended finance, it will not emerge later by default.

Government of Zambia | Nutrition coordination anchored at the highest level of government, supported by cross-ministerial structures and community engagement, is key to translating global evidence into national action. Zambia is working to reduce stunting from 32% through school feeding, dietary diversification, and whole-of-government alignment.

Government of Madagascar | A national nutrition package combining diversified production, fortification, local processing, school canteens, and behaviour-change programmes, tied to a unified roadmap with clear indicators and financing, demonstrates that the global agenda is operationally actionable at country level.