

A TRANSFORMATIONAL AGENDA

by Asma Lateef, *Bread for the World Institute*

As the 2016 Hunger Report has so clearly demonstrated, nutrition and health are inextricably linked. Good nutrition throughout the lifecycle, and especially in early childhood, is foundational for health and development. Conversely, hunger and the poor health resulting from undernutrition limit a person's earning potential, perpetuating poverty and undermining her and her country's development.

Food security—in other words, access to an adequate supply of diverse, nutritious foods—is an essential determinant of health. But food security and health have been confined to separate policy siloes. Fortunately that is beginning to change.

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015 appears to signal a new era in policy integration. The SDGs are an interdependent framework. Durable progress on one goal will depend on achieving progress on all the other goals. See Figure C.1.

If the question of what do people need to survive and thrive drove national and global priorities—the world would be a very different place. The 2030 sustainable development agenda is an opportunity to put that question at the heart of policymaking.

A transformational agenda must recognize that human development is multifaceted, as are the biggest challenges facing humanity from climate change to armed conflict to discrimination in all forms.

As advocates, our job is to build the political will to end hunger and poverty in a way that also takes care of the natural resources we so depend on.

The adoption of the SDGs at the United Nations General Assembly was truly a monumental event, the realization of a transparent and democratic process that lasted for more than three years. The goals were negotiated by all countries with input from ordinary people on every continent. They are inclusive and universal—they aim to leave no one behind and apply to all countries.

“In these Goals and targets, we are setting out a supremely ambitious and transformational vision. We envisage a world free of poverty, hunger, disease and want, where all life can thrive. We envisage a world free of fear and violence. A world with universal literacy. A world

Figure C.1 The Sustainable Development Goals



Source: Adapted from United Nations, 2015

with equitable and universal access to quality education at all levels, to health care and social protection, where physical, mental and social well-being are assured. A world where we reaffirm our commitments regarding the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation and where there is improved hygiene; and where food is sufficient, safe, affordable and nutritious. A world where human habitats are safe, resilient and sustainable and where there is universal access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy.”¹

Much like the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the SDGs are time bound and measurable, expiring in 2030. Unlike the MDGs, they include targets to end malnutrition in all its forms, recognizing that all countries are affected by some form of malnutrition and that many are affected by both undernutrition and obesity.

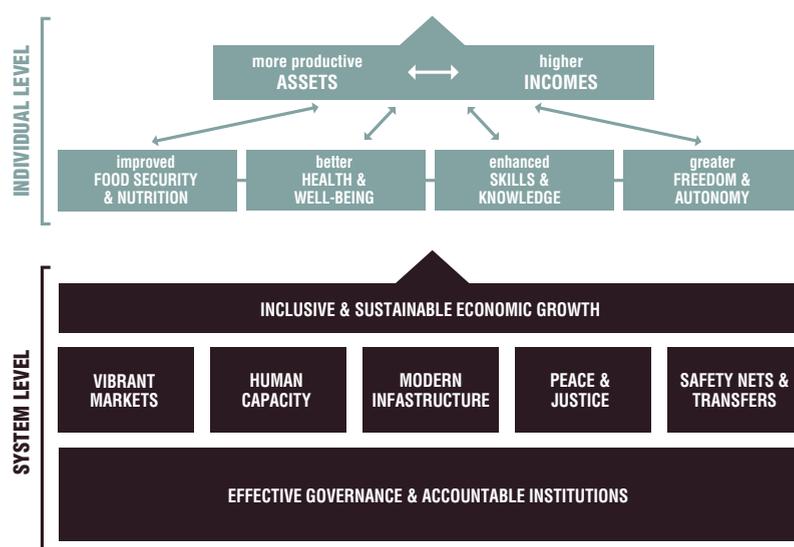
As in other countries, the United States will be developing plans to achieve the SDGs domestically. In the 2016 Hunger Report, we call on the U.S. government to engage its domestic civil society partners who are working to address the many social determinants of hunger and health in communities across the nation. Achieving progress will depend on leaders rising to the challenge everywhere, so the federal government will need to engage state and local leaders.

The U.S. government will also be looking afresh at its international development assistance programs. In a report released just days before the SDGs were adopted, the U.S. Agency for International Development unveiled a theory of change to end extreme poverty by 2030.² The theory reflects a multidimensional understanding of poverty. See Figure C.2.

We are the generation that could see the end of hunger and poverty. The SDGs provide a bold and ambitious framework that would transform the world we live in for generations to come. It is a difficult challenge, but it is not impossible. Countries and communities around the world have made tremendous progress against poverty and other hardships. A key ingredient for success has been political leadership. As advocates, our job is to build the political will to end hunger and poverty in a way that also takes care of the natural resources we so depend on.

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Figure C.2 **Diagram of USAID’s Conceptual Framework for Extreme Poverty Reduction**



Source: USAID