A Global Development Agenda: Toward 2015 and Beyond
by Faustine Wabwire

Key Points

• The newest data show that the world has made more progress against hunger than previously thought. With increased political support, it is in fact feasible to cut in half the proportion of hungry people by December 2015, the deadline to meet the MDGs. Even more importantly, the world can virtually end hunger within a generation.

• The enduring value of the MDGs as the most time-bound, measurable, and holistic approach yet to human development should be reaffirmed. The international community must reach agreement on a set of development goals to succeed the MDGs.

• Malnutrition is part of the unfinished MDG agenda. Improving nutrition among pregnant women, lactating mothers, and young children, in particular, is key to ending preventable child deaths and to unlocking the potential of the millions of children who face early childhood malnutrition.

• The post-2015 development agenda should include a stand-alone goal to achieve global food security and good nutrition by 2030, as articulated in the U.N. Secretary General’s High Level Panel’s recommendations.

Abstract

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) endorsed by 189 countries in 2000 are an unprecedented global effort to achieve development goals that are identified collectively, achievable, and measurable. Progress can be effectively monitored since there are specific targets for reducing hunger, reducing child and maternal mortality, improving access to clean water, etc.

Globally, substantial progress has been made toward many MDG targets—including cutting in half the proportion of people living in poverty. Every major region of the world made progress.

The targets for MDG 1 are to cut in half the proportion of people living with hunger and poverty by December 2015. The poverty target has been met. The hunger target has not, yet it is within reach if all countries are willing to do their part. Progress against malnutrition has been too slow. Globally, one in four children is stunted.

The United States should provide leadership and work within the global community to forge a universal set of global development goals to succeed the MDGs. These goals should include a stand-alone goal to end hunger and achieve food security and good nutrition, and they should advance women’s economic empowerment, community resilience, and effective institutions.
Experience with the MDGs has shown that making progress is easier when there are specific goals. The global rate of extreme poverty has been cut in half—a striking example of the power of goal-setting. With just over two years left to the MDG deadline of December 2015, now is the time for an intensive effort to reach the MDG global hunger target: cutting in half the proportion of hungry people.

Today, about 870 million people—one in every eight people on Earth—are malnourished, the vast majority (852 million) in developing countries. While this is far too many, there has been progress: the proportion of undernourished people in the developing world decreased from 23.2 percent in 1990–1992 to 14.9 percent in 2010–2012. The 2010-2012 figure is lower than expected; in fact, it puts the MDG hunger target within reach if the international community intensifies efforts to improve food security and agricultural productivity over the next two years.

Fighting malnutrition, however, is part of the unfinished agenda. In 2008, the leading British medical journal The Lancet declared that malnutrition among children younger than 2 is a global development challenge of the greatest urgency. Malnutrition during the critical period between pregnancy and the second birthday, often called the “1,000 Days” window, causes irreversible physical and cognitive damage. The United States works through its global food security initiative, Feed the Future, to emphasize the urgent need to improve maternal and child nutrition. Nutrition interventions during this window have a profound impact on the long-term economic development and stability of entire nations, because chronic malnutrition is an enormous drain on a country’s financial and human resources, translating into deficits of several billion dollars a year.

In sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 41 percent of all children younger than 5 are malnourished. It is the only world region where the number of child deaths is increasing, and the only one projected to suffer further increases in food insecurity and absolute poverty.

Reducing all forms of malnutrition will help achieve many of the MDGs by ending preventable child deaths and building smart, strong, and resilient communities and economies. Investing in nutrition is cost-effective. Every dollar invested in nutrition generates as much as $138 in better health and increased productivity, and of the “10 best buys in development” identified by a group of top economists, five are nutrition interventions. But despite the availability of relatively simple, very affordable interventions to treat malnutrition, nutrition has been and remains critically underfunded—both in development assistance accounts and in the most affected countries’ own budgets.

The good news on nutrition is that through the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, the governments of many of the most affected countries are committing leadership and resources, donor funding is rising, and civil society and the private sector are increasingly engaged. Recent commitments made at the June 2013 Nutrition for Growth High-Level Meeting hosted by the governments of the United Kingdom and Brazil and the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation will be critical in filling the funding gap.
The SUN movement brings together countries—41 at last count—that are committed to expanding effective, evidence-based nutrition actions so that they reach all young children and pregnant women at risk of malnutrition. Each SUN country identifies priorities and promotes both specific nutrition interventions that focus on the “1,000 Days” window, and nutrition-sensitive policies. SUN has great promise, and its efforts must be supported because malnutrition remains one of the biggest challenges to development in high-burden countries.

**Moving Forward: A Post-2015 Agenda**

The target of halving the proportion of people suffering from hunger by 2015 is within reach. With increased political support, it is indeed feasible to think of a world free from hunger by 2030. The global community must build on past achievements, redouble its efforts, and accelerate progress on the MDGs. This is the time. The final push and a strong finish by 2015 are critical to building momentum and creating an appetite for a universal post-2015 development framework.

In May 2013, the High Level Panel on the post-2015 development agenda—a group tasked with advising the United Nations Secretary General—released its report *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development*. The report advocates five “global shifts”:

- Leave no one behind;
- Put sustainable development at the core;
- Transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth;
- Build peace and effective, open, and accountable institutions for all; and
- Forge a new global partnership.

These themes form a robust and transformative framework for global action while also providing clear direction for government, civil society, and the private sector. The “shifts” offer space for a balanced development approach that spans all sectors. In order to be considered “met,” a target must be reached by all relevant income and social groups—thus ensuring a measure of inclusiveness that would be overlooked by looking at progress based on averages alone.

The panel also recommended that the post-2015 agenda adopt a goal to achieve food security and nutrition for all, emphasize the economic empowerment of women and girls, improve governance and institutions, and integrate equality and shared prosperity into all of the development goals so that no one is left behind.

In July 2013, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon released a report outlining his vision for the post-2015 agenda—*A Life of Dignity For All: Accelerating Progress toward the Millennium Development Goals and Advancing the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015*. The report calls for a universal development agenda that promotes inclusivity. This is very important. Today—unlike when the MDGs were agreed on in 2000–72 percent of the world’s poor people live in middle-income countries. To end extreme poverty, a future set of goals will have to apply to middle-income countries as well. In the United States, 15 percent of the population was living in poverty in 2011 and a quarter of all children live in households that experience hunger. Development goals should apply to all countries.

The post-2015 development agenda provides an opportunity to promote equity and equitable growth in all countries. It is also an opportunity to recognize linkages across key areas: food security and good nutrition for all; agricultural development; women’s economic empowerment; and good governance and effective institutions. Goals should be formulated in ways that capture the great potential of coordinated approaches, which have proven to be highly effective in responding to multiple development challenges.

**Nutrition**

Since 2000, there is new knowledge about the manifestation and impact of malnutrition. While significant progress in reducing the proportion of children who are underweight has been made in many regions, stunting is the leading cause of death and disability among children under 5. Today, there are 165 million stunted children around the world. Being far too short for their age is only the most visible sign. Their cognitive and physical development has been compromised by chronic malnutrition, and for their entire lives, they will be more likely to suffer from health problems—all of which will make them less productive than they could be.
In the end, stunting is a tragedy for individuals and families that also impedes a nation’s ability to develop economically. Among potential indicators of malnutrition, childhood stunting has proven to be the most powerful, based on its ability to capture inequity; reveal chronic problems of poor health, diet, and child-rearing practices; and focus on the period when the effects of malnutrition are largely irreversible (the 1,000 Days from pregnancy through age 2).

The post-2015, post-MDG agenda should include an ambitious but achievable goal. In 2012, the World Health Assembly (WHA) endorsed a set of nutrition targets, including a goal of reducing the number of stunted children by 40 percent by 2025. This will require a reduction in stunting of nearly 4 percent each year. This rate of progress has proven to be achievable by countries that have made significant nutrition investments as well as nutrition-sensitive investments in agriculture, health, and sanitation. Country-specific targets for progress will be required to achieve the global stunting goal. The SUN Movement is supporting SUN countries in developing and implementing country-specific strategies.

Agriculture-Led Growth

While economic growth has played an important role in reducing global poverty in the last two decades, evidence suggests that economic growth alone is not sufficient to sustain the progress made in reducing hunger and malnutrition. In fact, rural hunger and poverty cannot be reduced by relying entirely on economic growth in urban areas. For example, rural poverty declined rapidly in East and Southeast Asia between 1993 and 2002. More than 80 percent of the decline was attributable to better conditions in rural areas, where agriculture was a source of livelihood for 86 percent of the population, rather than to migration to cities. On the other hand, in sub-Saharan Africa, which has been experiencing strong economic growth for the past decade, the number of hungry people is actually increasing at an alarming rate.

The 2007-2008 food price crisis was a wake-up call for the international community, reigniting the discussion of the need for a much greater focus on agricultural development. In July 2009, Group of 8 (G-8) leaders representing eight developed economies gathered in L’Aquila, Italy, where a U.S. proposal to invest significantly more resources in agriculture won support from other donors. In what became known as the L’Aquila Food Security Initiative, G-8 members committed to providing $22 billion in financing for agriculture and food security over three years. More than four years into the L’Aquila initiative, the United States has fulfilled its pledge of $3.5 billion, but other donors are falling short. The primary U.S. contribution is the Feed the Future initiative, which seeks to support countries in establishing a complete agriculture value chain.

The evidence is clear that agriculture-led growth is far more effective in reducing hunger and poverty than growth driven by other sectors. Today, more than half of the world’s 870 million hungry and malnourished people live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. Yet it took the crisis of 2007-2008, which drove more than 100 million additional people into poverty, to galvanize national governments and their development partners.
to begin to reverse decades of neglect of agricultural development.

Economic growth that does not include agriculture as a leading sector often fails to help hungry and poor people. For example, Tanzania’s economy has been growing steadily over the past 10 years—by an average of 6.9 percent a year. Five sectors were the source of almost 60 percent of Tanzania’s economic growth between 2008 and 2012: communications, banking and financial services, retail trade, construction, and manufacturing. Agriculture also contributed to Tanzania’s economic growth—this was a given because it’s a significant share of GDP, about 25 percent—but in the same 2008-2012 time frame, agriculture grew more slowly than the economy as a whole.

The five leading growth sectors are concentrated in urban areas, but about 80 percent of Tanzania’s poor people live in rural areas. This urban focus explains why year after year of consistent economic growth has not significantly lowered Tanzania’s poverty rate. Tanzania’s recent economic trends support the argument that slow agricultural growth in Africa is an obstacle—the fact that most poor people are dependent on an underperforming sector is part of the explanation for continued high rates of hunger, malnutrition, and poverty.

The post-2015 development agenda must go beyond the MDG hunger and poverty targets to reach the very poorest people. This will require a more intense focus on agricultural development among smallholders, particularly on improving productivity and generating employment opportunities. The gender dimensions of nutritional status and control of agricultural assets must be taken into account.

To be most effective in improving nutrition, agriculture programs should move beyond a narrow focus on agriculture for food production toward a broader consideration of people’s livelihoods. The programs should incorporate specific nutrition goals and interventions targeted to the most vulnerable groups, especially pregnant women and young children. Agriculture programs that boost productivity can improve nutrition through several pathways, including improving dietary diversity and food safety; increasing rural incomes through better opportunities to sell crops; empowering women to get access to the resources they need to produce nutritious food; and creating wider macroeconomic benefits, such as lower food prices due to the larger food supply.

The coming years are also likely to bring further stressors on agricultural production. Older problems, such as competition for scarce natural resources, environmental degradation, and increasingly urbanized populations, have been joined by newer ones, such as unfamiliar insects and plant diseases brought by a changing climate and the accelerating growth of the human population. The projected surge to 9 billion people by 2050, accompanied by only slight increases in available farmland, means that additional production will need to come from strategies that increase productivity.

Climate change—the long-term shifts in temperature now taking place and projected to continue, and the results of those shifts—is expected to increase the frequency of shocks such as flooding and drought. Around the world, climate change is already damaging food and water security in significant and highly unpredictable ways. In many low-income countries, it is droughts that have particularly severe effects on economic growth and nutrition. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, agriculture is already under threat because the adaptive capacity of poor rural smallholders is extremely low.

Increased investments in agricultural research and extension and in rural infrastructure will help prepare for these challenges. Extension services, for example, can help farmers adopt new technologies and improved seeds and livestock varieties, build their knowledge and skills, and encourage them to form networks for sharing information. Donors should support effective local, national, and regional agriculture efforts. For example, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) is working to create the right technical and regulatory environment for agriculture and to strengthen agricultural innovation systems.

In developing countries, significant volumes of grain are lost after harvest. These losses come at a cost to the environment and contribute to climate change, because land, water,
and non-renewable resources such as fertilizer and energy are used to produce, process, handle, and transport food that no one consumes. In most low-income countries, particularly in Africa, post-harvest losses in cereal quantity and quality lead to lower earnings at the market and less nutritious family meals.

The annual cost of grain losses to African countries is estimated at $4 billion. This is far more than the continent receives in food aid—in fact, $4 billion is a significant percentage of the food aid sub-Saharan Africa received in the entire decade 1998-2008 (an estimated $6.1 billion). Its cost is in the same range as the annual value of sub-Saharan Africa’s total cereal imports (which ranged between $3 billion and $7 billion over the period 2000-2007). Perhaps most importantly, $4 billion would provide sufficient food every day for a year for at least 48 million people.18

Building capacity to support the food supply chain will help reduce grain losses as well as improve food quality and safety, generate more income, and contribute to food and nutritional security.19 As the amounts of traditional development assistance decline relative to other financial flows, international finance institutions and the private sector should join donor countries in assisting countries in strengthening their capacity to prevent post-harvest losses.

Women: The Missing Link in Ending Hunger

Around the world, socially disadvantaged populations bear the brunt of low agricultural productivity. One of these groups is at the nexus of agriculture and nutrition: women. In many developing countries, women not only prepare food but are also the main agricultural producers. In Southeast Asia, women supply up to 90 percent of the labor required for rice cultivation. In sub-Saharan Africa, women produce up to 70 percent of the food for their households and the market.20 Evidence shows that reducing gender inequality increases agricultural productivity. Greater gender equality leads to improved crop yields, higher economic productivity, faster growth, and improvements in the quality of life—including less malnutrition and fewer infant deaths. Startling research findings show that, in fact, almost 55 percent of the reduction in hunger from 1970 to 1995 can be attributed to improvements in women’s status in society—more than agricultural or technological advances contributed.

The specific indicators of gender equality include: both women and men are able to participate fully as economic actors, they are motivated by sharing in the benefits of their work, they have equal input into decision-making, and the back-breaking repetitive tasks associated with rural living in poor countries are shared more equitably. As a concrete first step, an estimated 12 percent to 17 percent reduction in global malnutrition could come from enabling female farmers to match the yields of male farmers by allowing them equal access to resources.21

Removing barriers to women’s equal access to economic opportunities, education, and productive inputs can generate broad-based productivity gains, which are all the more important in an increasingly competitive society. Leveling the playing field so that women and men have equal chances to actively engage socially and politically—to make decisions and shape policies—is likely to lead over time to more representative and more inclusive institutions and policies.

Gender equality and the economic empowerment of women are preconditions for overcoming poverty, hunger, and malnutrition. Therefore, they must be given priority in the post-2015 development agenda. It is true that the lives of girls and women have changed dramatically over the past 50 years. While the pace of change has been astonishing in some areas, progress toward gender equality has been limited in other areas—even in developed countries. Women are vulnerable to food insecurity despite being primary actors in the food chain, suffering disproportionately from hunger and illness. Hunger and poverty remain stubbornly “feminized”—globally, 70 percent of people living in absolute poverty are female.22

In spite of the central role of women in fostering stable and healthy societies, crises such as spikes in food prices, the global economic downturn and slow recovery, and the effects of climate change affect women and girls disproportionately. In too many households and communities, women and girls are often the last to eat, are not sent to school when household funds are low, and are the first to be laid off when employers suffer financial setbacks.

Research from a dozen or more countries shows that increasing household income does not necessarily improve the nutritional and health status of women and children.
when that income is controlled by men. But when women have bargaining power within the household, they are likely to help translate gains in income into food security and improvements in nutrition.\textsuperscript{23}

Where gender gaps have closed quickly, it is due to evolution in institutions and markets, both formal and informal; how growth has played out; and how all these factors have interacted through household decisions. Removing discriminatory land and labor laws helps women farmers produce more food. The combination of paying women equally; improving their access to tools, fertilizers, and credit; and guaranteeing their right to own and access land will be a game-changer in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. In addition, markets (which open new employment opportunities for women) and stronger efforts to expand school systems and lower their costs can influence household decisions to the benefit of girls and young women.

Women’s empowerment (MDG 3) should be fully included in both the push to reach MDG targets before the deadline and the framing of the post-2015 goals. To date, the U.S. government has intentionally focused on women smallholder farmers in its approach to reducing hunger and malnutrition. In 2012, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), USAID, and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative launched the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI).\textsuperscript{24} The index—a tool for monitoring how agricultural development programs help quantify changes in women’s empowerment and gender equality—is now being used to assess programs under Feed the Future.

WEAI measures women’s roles in the agriculture sector and the extent of their engagement in five domains, each with indicators that are assessed individually. These are production (e.g., the degree of autonomy a woman has in agricultural production); resources (e.g., access to credit and equipment); income (e.g., control over expenditures); leadership (e.g., comfort speaking in public); and time (e.g.,

![Figure 4 Employment by Sector (as a share of total employment) by Gender](image)

**Figure 4** Employment by Sector (as a share of total employment) by Gender


![Figure 5 The Five Domains of Empowerment in the WEAI](image)

**Figure 5** The Five Domains of Empowerment in the WEAI

* Source: www.feedthefuture.gov
satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the amount of leisure time available).

In order for WEAI and other components of the renewed U.S. commitment to gender equality to result in improved productivity and food security, they must first be mainstreamed into policy actions and funded. Currently, financial support for women’s rights and economic empowerment remains lacking.

Agricultural strategies and programs need to be based on a deeper understanding of the impact of gender—both the similar and the different interests of women and men as consumers and producers within food systems. The issue of access to assets is particularly important. To achieve this, greater efforts are needed to collect evidence disaggregated by gender that can be used to improve future interventions.

In his 2013 State of the Union address, President Obama remarked:

We also know that progress in the most impoverished parts of our world enriches us all, not only because it creates new markets, more stable order in certain regions of the world, but also because it’s the right thing to do.

You know, in many places, people live on little more than a dollar a day. So the United States will join with our allies to eradicate such extreme poverty in the next two decades, by connecting more people to the global economy, by empowering women, by giving our young and brightest minds new opportunities to serve and helping communities to feed and power and educate themselves, by saving the world’s children from preventable deaths, and by realizing the promise of an AIDS-free generation, which is within our reach.

In the next set of development goals, the United States and other development partners should intensify efforts to advocate for gender equality by translating their political commitments, including stronger financial support, into country-level policies and programs.

**Ending Global Hunger: Key Issues for Sustainability**

Reaching the poorest and most isolated people is both essential to ending global hunger, and more difficult and complex than the efforts made under the MDG targets of cutting hunger and extreme poverty in half, valuable though that progress is. Here we identify and briefly discuss key issues in reaching those hardest to reach and in ensuring that progress against hunger is lasting and sustained—some of the “we can’t end hunger unless...” challenges.

**Disaster response and resilience**

Sudden, dramatic spikes in staple food prices, beginning in 2007, ushered in an era of high and volatile food prices. These conditions affect all families, but especially those who are poor, because poor people spend up to 70 percent of their entire incomes on food. It is very difficult to adjust to significant and sudden price increases when there is little discretionary spending in the household budget; all funds are earmarked for basic necessities. The food price crisis also imposed indirect economic costs. When families have less to spend on goods and services besides food, already fragile local and national economies are weakened further.

Food emergencies, including famine, are slow-onset. Yet despite some advances, too often the link between early warning and early action fails, and the opportunity to intervene before a crisis has reached its worst point is lost. This disconnect was starkly apparent in Somalia during the 2010-2011 hunger emergency, which later crossed the threshold into famine. It was triggered by severe drought, violence and instability, and high food prices. For months, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) pointed to an impending famine. Crops dried up, livestock died, and desperation spread. But the humanitarian system did not mobilize until the window of opportunity to prevent the worst had closed. Women carrying skeletal babies for hundreds of miles to find food in refugee camps were a very visible sign that the early warning system had failed for lack of swift response. There is still no accurate count of those who died, but they included young children by the tens of thousands.

Droughts, floods, and other disasters that endanger millions of people at a time are increasingly common. The 2010-2011 drought was the Horn of Africa’s fourth since 2000. Only a year later, drought in Africa’s Sahel region—the third in eight years—affected 18 million people. Malnutrition rates that were already extremely high, particularly among young children, rose sharply. More than 1 million children are currently suffering from acute malnutrition.

USAID’s Resiliency Policy, adopted in 2012, should explore opportunities to develop and deepen linkages among early warning systems, whether community, national, or international. There is also value added in developing approaches that incorporate qualitative, informal early warnings from smallholder farmers and youth into official analyses and decision-making. For example, a key strength of Ethiopia’s national early warning system is its ability to draw on local-level data and cascade early warnings from national back to regional and community levels. The Climate Change Adaptation in Africa project has successfully integrated traditional and scientific approaches to weather forecasting, resulting in more accurate forecasts and greater community acceptance.
The importance of not only improving humanitarian response, but also strengthening community resilience in the face of extremely difficult environmental conditions, cannot be overstated. It is imperative to develop better ways of coping with high food prices, limited availability, malnutrition, and loss of assets, particularly livestock. It is far more cost-effective—and obviously far more effective in preventing human suffering and death—to build social protection programs and agricultural and economic systems that are sustainable in the long run than it is to fly in emergency rations.

Responding effectively to climate change means building resilience in communities where people have always struggled to produce enough food. It demands strong and organized political leadership, infrastructure, and resources at all levels—local, regional, national, and international. Understanding the interactions between agriculture and climate well enough to know how to respond effectively will require new investments to improve data collection and analysis. Strengthening local capacity to create and implement informed, effective adaptation measures is vital to building resilience.

In June 2013, President Obama announced a plan to cut carbon emissions in the United States. The president is right to make climate change a priority for his second term. The plan needs to go beyond cutting carbon emissions to include commitments to scale up the adaptive capacity of poor communities at the country and regional levels. Preparing to feed 9 billion people in a sustainable way requires our urgent attention now, not when all 9 billion of us are already here. The president should help to mobilize and bring together all stakeholders to adopt and act on a shared definition of community resilience and the key steps to achieving it.

Climate change demands a multifaceted approach that includes promoting resilient communities, fostering low-carbon growth, and reducing emissions from deforestation and land degradation. It should be integrated into all relevant foreign assistance programs.

### Good Governance, Effective Institutions, and Local Capacity Strengthening

Both the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon endorsed the idea of setting a goal for peace and effective governance based on the rule of law and sound institutions. Governance and accountability, though not formally mentioned in the MDGs, is recognized as a crucial dimension of development and should be incorporated throughout the post-2015 development agenda. In fact, evidence suggests a direct correlation between a country’s policy and institutional framework and progress towards the MDGs. Cross-country evidence has shown how poor governance and corruption harm the fair distribution of income among the population, which leads to lack of access to sufficient nutritious food for some.

Strengthening local capacities and institutions remains a major challenge for the effective design and implementation of development programs and policies. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action recognize that limited capacity is one of the major constraints to development; they highlight the need for devel-
development assistance to be country-led and better coordinated. The Busan Framework calls for inclusive country ownership with new roles and responsibilities for most development actors. Resilience against climate change-related shocks is just one example of a goal that depends on the capacity of each developing country to build on the gains achieved with donor assistance rather than having donor assistance replace its own efforts.

Today, critical questions about strengthening local capacity must include: What examples are inspiring? What is working here? What isn’t? And, perhaps most importantly, what is missing? In the post-2015 agenda, the first steps could be to identify the barriers inhibiting local capacity development—Programs in silos? Competing interests? Conflicting incentives?—and develop action plans to help break down those barriers. In this approach, development results will be measured not only by short-term outputs, nor even only by longer-term outcomes, but also by how well actors such as donors, civil society, the private sector, and national governments engage local, national, and regional leaders in strengthening country systems. Greater emphasis should be placed on knowledge sharing, policy support, partnering, and building resilience.

Increased technical and financial support should continue to be allocated to local capacity development. This will also help local stakeholders “own” national development goals. One of these needs, for example, is support for national agricultural research institutions and systems to provide better diagnostic, analytical, and measurement tools.

The United States and other development partners should explicitly support a goal on good governance, effective leadership, and the institutions that make them work. It is a complex, non-linear and long-term change process in which no single factor (e.g., information, education and training, technical assistance, policy advice) is by itself an explanation for the development of capacity. Ultimately, developing capacity is about addressing the specific needs of partner countries and communities through three interlinked dimensions: individual, organizational, and enabling environment.

The United States through its USAID Forward reform agenda should continue to emphasize a results-driven and systemic framework—based on rigorous needs assessment, innovative change process logic, and participatory implementation—that is driven by genuine local ownership, adaptive management, and measurable results. Within the USAID Forward reform agenda, Feed the Future is a good place to start. Its implementation should be used to illustrate the value of the U.S. government’s renewed commitment to strengthening local capacity in countries.

At the global level, good governance of the food system is an indispensable element for achieving food security and nutrition, and it calls for greater transparency and food policy coherence. This means that improving the likelihood of reaching the hunger target depends not just on increased productivity, but also and quite critically on an enabling policy environment for responsible investments. Realizing this goal will require expanded, less restricted regional and global trade to make food production more efficient and ensure that agricultural crops and livestock are produced in countries with the most abundant or inexpensive inputs. The G-20 and others should also make more effort to liberalize trade in agriculture and agree to avoid export restrictions on food.

### Table 1 Policy Options for Empowering the Food Insecure

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<td>Access to information and knowledge</td>
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Source: UNDP 2012.
Recommendations

• The United States should use its leadership to leverage support for the adoption of a unified set of global development goals.
• The post-2015 development framework should include a stand-alone universal goal of achieving food security and good nutrition for all. The goal should be achieved through country-developed and country-led plans focused on smallholder farmers and on improved local technical and institutional capacities.

Endnotes

13 The Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) is a composite measurement tool that indicates women’s control over critical parts of their lives in the household, community, and economy. It allows us to identify women who are disempowered and understand how to increase autonomy and decision-making in key domains. The WEAI is also a useful tool for tracking progress toward gender equality, which is one of the Millennium Development Goals.
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