

# Halving hunger: it can be done

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Task Force on Hunger

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## Foreword

The world has an unprecedented opportunity to improve the lives of billions of people by adopting practical approaches to meeting the Millennium Development Goals. At the request of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the UN Millennium Project has identified practical strategies to eradicate poverty by scaling up investments in infrastructure and human capital while promoting gender equality and environmental sustainability. These strategies are described in the UN Millennium Project's report *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, which was coauthored by the coordinators of the UN Millennium Project task forces.

The task forces have identified the interventions and policy measures needed to achieve each of the Goals. In *Halving Hunger: It Can Be Done*, the Task Force on Hunger underscores that the goal to reduce hunger by half by 2015 is achievable with proven, effective, targeted interventions—a message that is shared in *Investing in Development*. *Halving Hunger* calls for concrete steps to reduce hunger across the world through actions in several key areas, including investments to improve the agricultural production of food-insecure farmers, improvements in the nutritional status of the chronically hungry and vulnerable, investments in productive safety nets, promotion of rural markets and off-farm employment to increase the incomes of the hungry, and restoration and conservation of natural resources essential for food security.

These specific investments require political actions by local and national governments and international development partners, and the report identifies and describes these actions in thoughtful detail. The report also urges an urgent focus on “hunger hotspots” around the world, places where a significant proportion of children suffer from chronic undernutrition.

This report has been prepared by a group of leading experts who contributed in their personal capacity and generously volunteered their time and great expertise to this important task. I am very grateful for their thorough and skilled efforts, and I know that the avenues of action they have outlined in this report will make an important contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. I strongly recommend this report to all who are interested in halving hunger by 2015, a goal that certainly should be embraced, and achieved, around the world.

Jeffrey D. Sachs  
New York  
January 17, 2005

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## Preface

This report sets out priority interventions for the world to address immediately to halve hunger by 2015. It builds on the many previous attempts to eliminate world hunger that resulted in cutting the proportion of hungry people in the world from 33 percent to 18 percent in the past 40 years. Yet 852 million people still go to bed hungry every night. Most current plans share the view that it is feasible to rapidly reduce hunger. What is needed now is to translate recommendations into action on a scale commensurate with the problem. What is needed are business plans created at the country level that, in addition to identifying the recommended interventions, outline how they will be implemented, where the priority areas of intervention are, which organizations should implement them, how much the interventions are going to cost, and what the benefits will be. This report provides guidelines for poor countries to develop such plans.

On July 5, 2004, the UN Secretary-General addressed heads of African states and senior members of the international community at a presidential-level seminar on hunger in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Deploring “one of the most serious problems on earth—the plague of hunger,” he stated, “Hunger is a complex crisis. To solve it, we must address the interconnected challenges of agriculture; healthcare; nutrition; adverse and unfair market conditions; weak infrastructure; and environmental degradation.” He called for a “uniquely African Green Revolution in the twenty-first century” to spearhead the fight against hunger.

This report sets out actions that respond to the Secretary-General’s call for concerted action to reduce hunger—in Africa and throughout the world. It differs from other global initiatives in its response to the Millennium Development Goals and its interdependence with the recommendations of the nine other task forces addressing the other Goals. The interventions recommended

here are based on scientifically sound, proven, and effective approaches, policies, and technologies, as well as on the expert judgment of the task force members.

The Task Force on Hunger was charged with being conceptually right, analytically strong, and politically bold. The independence of the task force, with all members acting in their personal capacity and asked to “leave their institutional baggage at the door,” was coupled with a secretariat that produced analysis and experience based on country case studies and extensive dialogue with stakeholders. The task force’s seven main recommendations, and the interventions embedded in each of them, may challenge the status quo and make some practitioners uneasy. But the time has come for major changes, both in attitudes and resources, to reach the hunger Goal.

The work of the task force was supported by many individuals and institutions who generously contributed their expertise, financial resources, or in-kind support. To all of them, we are very grateful.

Our conclusion is that hunger can be halved by 2015 and eventually eradicated from our planet—with the deliberate and timely implementation of the recommendations in this report. It can be done.

Pedro A. Sanchez and M.S. Swaminathan  
Coordinators, Task Force on Hunger, New York and Chennai  
January 17, 2005

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## The Task Force on Hunger's methodology

The Task Force held intensive discussions at meetings in New York (October 2002), Nairobi and Lilongwe (March 2003), Des Moines (October 2003), Delhi and Chennai (February 2004), Kampala (April 2004), Addis Ababa (July 2004), and Bellagio (September 2004). In between meetings, members and associates engaged in extensive email dialogues that helped shape the task force's thinking and conclusions. Several contentious issues were exhaustively discussed until a consensus emerged. These issues included the relative importance of agricultural versus nutritional interventions, development versus food aid, mineral versus organic fertilizers, plant biotechnology versus conventional breeding approaches—and others. Field studies were conducted in Western Kenya; Southern Malawi; Tigray, Ethiopia; and Rajasthan, Chennai, and Pondicherry in India. The fieldwork enabled members and associates to develop a common framework around hunger issues, and to discuss it with farmers, community members, national government leaders, and institutions working in the field. Regional consultations were held with South Asian stakeholders in Delhi (February 2004) and with African stakeholders in Kampala (April 2004) to provide a “reality check” for the emerging recommendations. A special consultation on three key issues (soil health, markets, and reinventing extension) was held at the World Bank in June 2004.

The task force commissioned 15 papers dealing with a variety of issues, many of them through the International Food Policy Research Institute (see appendix 2 for a complete listing). The papers provided the analytical basis for our recommendations, but we also relied on our expert judgment when conclusive data were not available. The task force also undertook original research on hunger hotspots, in close collaboration with associates and with the Center for International Earth Science Information Network at Columbia University and the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation in Chennai, India. This research

and the task force's emerging recommendations were presented in a background paper in January 2003 and in an interim report in December 2003.

Together with other task forces, advisory work in pilot countries was conducted in Ghana, Kenya, and Ethiopia through the newly established Millennium Development Goals Technical Support Centre in Nairobi, as well as in Uganda, a pilot country specific to our task force. These studies sharpened our analysis through interactions with government officials, donors, and the national nongovernmental organization community.

Task force members presented work in progress and solicited feedback through a wide array of invited presentations. In Europe these included presentations at the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations World Food Programme (Rome); Trinity College and the United Nations World Food Programme Senior Management Conference (Dublin); the Agricultural University and the Ministry of Development Cooperation (Norway); and the OECD Donor Assistance Committee (Stockholm, Paris). In India, the National Food Summit, Delhi. In Africa, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research Annual General Meeting, held at the United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi; various working sessions with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Johannesburg); several meetings of the Ethiopia Food Security Coalition, Addis Ababa; the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa, Dakar; the Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa; and the 2020 Conference on Food Security in Africa, in Kampala. In Canada, the Canadian International Development Agency, the International Development Research Centre, and Guelph University. In the United States, the International Center for Research on Women; the World Bank 2003 Rural Week and other meetings; the United States Agency for International Development, the U.S. Congress Senate Agriculture and Foreign Relations Committees and House of Representatives Human Rights and Congressional Human Rights Caucus; the United Nations Development Programme, UN Economic and Social Council; the UN Commission on Sustainable Development; the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition; the American Society of Agronomy, World Food Prize Symposia 2002, 2003, and 2004; the Council on Foreign Relations; New York Academy of Sciences; New State of the Planet Conference and Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University; the Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, Mass.; Kansas State University; Crop Science Society of America; University of Florida; International Food Policy Research Institute; University of Missouri; World Agricultural Forum; Cornell University; and Ohio State University. In Mexico, the Monterrey Bridge Coalition, and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research 2004 Annual General Meeting in Mexico City.

A focal point of the task force's constituency-building was the presidential-level seminar on "Innovative Approaches to Meeting the Hunger Millennium

Development Goal in Africa,” cohosted by the government of Ethiopia and the Task Force on Hunger on July 5, 2004, in Addis Ababa. At that meeting, which drew seven heads of state and more than 550 policymakers, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called for the launch of a “Uniquely African Green Revolution in the Twenty-first Century.”

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## Acknowledgments

The Task Force on Hunger is indebted to the many individuals, institutions, and communities that contributed to its work.

Jeffrey Sachs provided bold leadership for the UN Millennium Project. He and the staff of the Project Secretariat, particularly John McArthur and Chandrika Bahadur, contributed tremendously to our work.

Many institutions generously hosted or co-organized task force meetings, events, or study tours in Africa, India, Europe, and the United States: the Earth Institute at Columbia University, the International Food Policy Research Institute, the International Livestock Research Institute, the UN Millennium Project, the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development, the Rockefeller Foundation, the M.S. Swaminathan Foundation, the World Agroforestry Centre, the World Bank, the World Food Prize Foundation, and the United Nations World Food Programme in India, Ethiopia, and Italy.

The task force drew from the research and expertise of many institutions engaged in hunger-related issues. It also commissioned research papers to augment the knowledge base, with thanks to all the authors who contributed. At the International Food Policy Research Institute: Stuart Gillespie, Suneetha Kadiyala, Joseph M. Hunt, Natalia Caldes, Akhter Ahmed, Ruth Meinzen-Dick, Monica di Gregorio, Lawrence Haddad, Joanne Gaskell, Manohar Sharma. At the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation: Swarna S. Vepa, Lavanya Ravikanth Anneboina, Ruchita Manghnani. At Bread for the World: David Beckmann and Emily Byers. At the International Research Institute for Climate Prediction: James W. Hansen, Maxx Dille, Lisa Goddard, Esther Ebrahimian, Polly Ericksen. The Center for International Earth Science Information Network prepared all the GIS-based maps for this report, together with Rafael Flor of the Earth Institute, and conducted spatially based statistical analysis by Alex de Sherbinin, Marc Levy, Adam Storeygard, Deborah Balk.

---

At the International Center for Research on Women: Kavita Sethuraman and Kathy Kurz. At the World Bank: Kevin Cleaver, Andrew Goodland, Meera Shekar. At Columbia University: Jeffrey D. Sachs, Daniel Hillel. In addition, we thank Sara Scherr, lead author of the task force's background paper, Don Doering, lead author of the task force's interim report, and Philip Dobie and Nalan Yuksel, lead authors of the final report, for their extraordinary hard work. Lisa Dreier and Rafael Flor served as contributing authors to the final report, together with many members of the task force.

The task force is grateful to its donors and funding partners, whose support allowed our group to undertake broad participation and stakeholder engagement. Agencies that generously supported the Task Force on Hunger are the United Nations Millennium Project Trust Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the Canadian International Development Agency, the U.K. Department for International Development, the Earth Institute at Columbia University, Development Cooperation Ireland, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Swedish International Development Association, the World Bank, and the United Nations World Food Programme.

The task force extends deep appreciation to those who provided incisive reviews of this report, particularly Professors Per Pinstrup-Andersen and Christopher Barrett of Cornell University, as well as the Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations World Food Programme, the World Bank, the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition, the U.K. Department for International Development, and many others. They contributed much to the final quality of this report.

Last, we thank the communities in hungry regions visited by the task force. They inspired us with their tenacity, innovations, and hope. We dedicate this work to them.

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## Abbreviations

<b>CGIAR</b>	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAO</b>	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>GDP</b>	gross domestic product
<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>NGO</b>	nongovernmental organization
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PRSP</b>	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>USAID/MOST</b>	United States Agency for International Development Micronutrient Program
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization



# goals

## Millennium Development Goals

### Goal 1

#### Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

##### Target 1.

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day

##### Target 2.

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

### Goal 2

#### Achieve universal primary education

##### Target 3.

Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

### Goal 3

#### Promote gender equality and empower women

##### Target 4.

Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

### Goal 4

#### Reduce child mortality

##### Target 5.

Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

### Goal 5

#### Improve maternal health

##### Target 6.

Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

### Goal 6

#### Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

##### Target 7.

Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

##### Target 8.

Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

**Goal 7****Ensure  
environmental  
sustainability****Target 9.**

Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources

**Target 10.**

Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

**Target 11.**

Have achieved by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

**Goal 8****Develop a global  
partnership for  
development****Target 12.**

Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, nondiscriminatory trading and financial system (includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction—both nationally and internationally)

**Target 13.**

Address the special needs of the least developed countries (includes tariff- and quota-free access for exports, enhanced program of debt relief for and cancellation of official bilateral debt, and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction)

**Target 14.**

Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing states (through the Program of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and 22nd General Assembly provisions)

**Target 15.**

Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term

Some of the indicators listed below are monitored separately for the least developed countries, Africa, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing states

**Target 16.**

In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth

**Target 17.**

In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries

**Target 18.**

In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies



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## Executive summary

Over the past 20 years, the proportion of the world's people who are hungry has declined from one-fifth to one-sixth, and the absolute number of hungry people has fallen slightly. But 852 million people are still chronically or acutely malnourished. Most of them are in Asia, particularly India (221 million) and China (142 million). Sub-Saharan Africa has 204 million hungry and is the only region of the world where the prevalence of both general undernourishment and children's underweight status are increasing. If current trends continue, this region will not only fail to achieve the hunger Goal, but it is likely to suffer from increasing numbers of hungry people. That is why this report emphasizes the needs of Sub-Saharan Africa while addressing global hunger.

Hunger continues to be a global tragedy. It requires a concerted and persistent worldwide effort to eliminate it. The Task Force on Hunger is convinced that hunger can be halved by 2015. Indeed, the task force will not be satisfied with the mere attainment of that goal. It sees reaching the hunger Goal as a milestone in the global effort to eliminate hunger.

### **Setting the stage**

Hunger is both a cause and an effect of poverty—it holds back economic growth and limits progress in reducing poverty. The negative economic impact of hunger is dramatic, with annual losses of at least 6–10 percent in forgone GDP due to losses in labor productivity. Economic growth alone is insufficient for eliminating hunger because so many hungry people live in deep “poverty traps,” beyond the reach of markets. Poor and hungry people often face social and political exclusion, unable to demand their rights. They have little access to education, health services, and safe drinking water.

The challenge of halving hunger is thus closely linked with that of achieving the other Millennium Development Goals (see Goals on p. xxiv). Reducing

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strategies**

hunger will speed progress toward other Goals, and vice versa. Political action to reduce hunger should address hunger, poverty, and disease simultaneously. It is particularly important that reducing hunger should be a major part of poverty reduction strategies, since little progress in reducing poverty is likely as long as large numbers of people suffer from malnutrition.

***Kinds of hunger***

Hunger occurs in three different forms: acute, chronic, and hidden. Most people with access to television have seen haunting images of the starvation that typically occurs during famines and disasters. But those suffering from such acute hunger represent only a small part—roughly 10 percent—of the world’s hungry. Most of the hungry, approximately 90 percent, are chronically undernourished. Chronic undernourishment is caused by a constant or recurrent lack of access to food of sufficient quality and quantity, good healthcare, and necessary caring practices. It results in underweight and stunted children—as well as high child mortality brought about by associated diseases. Hidden hunger, caused by a lack of essential micronutrients (vitamins and minerals), afflicts more than 2 billion, even when they consume adequate amounts of calories and protein. The world has demonstrated its generosity in helping the victims of acute hunger. Unfortunately chronic and hidden forms of hunger are not as dramatic, and receive much less global attention and support.

***Causes of hunger***

People go hungry despite an abundant world food supply, because they cannot obtain food of sufficient quantity or quality to meet their nutritional requirements. There are many reasons for this to be so. In analyses by the task force and other researchers, the following factors emerged as strongly correlated with high levels of underweight preschool children in developing countries: poverty, low food production, mothers’ lack of education, poor water, sanitation and health facilities, and climatic shocks. Research has found that women’s education was associated with 43 percent of the reduction in child malnutrition between 1970 and 1995, followed by increases in agricultural production (26 percent), and improvements in the health environment (19 percent) and in women’s status relative to men (12 percent).

Adequate nutrition begins at the household level, where gender discrimination, traditional practices, and inadequate nutrition awareness can limit the food intake of women and children. For example, the best nourishment for small children is exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, then breastfeeding plus complementary foods through their first two years. Yet women may not be able to produce breastmilk of sufficient quality and quantity when they themselves are malnourished. In some parts of the world, intrahousehold inequalities may result in women and girls eating last, finishing what remains after the men and boys have eaten.

## Poverty is a major cause of hunger

Many women, besides having limited education, become mothers at a young age, have improper birth spacing, and lack awareness of or access to basic nutrition and child nurturing. Undernourished, they often become anemic when they are pregnant due to lack of iron in their diet. This increases the risk of low birthweight in their babies, perpetuating a vicious circle of malnourishment over generations. Good health, coupled with safe water and good sanitation, is vital for maintaining adequate nutrition. Common infectious diseases prevent people from absorbing and utilizing food properly, and parasites often compete for much that is eaten.

The interaction works both ways. Malnutrition and hunger are the number one risk factor for illness worldwide. The interactive threats of hunger and HIV/AIDS in parts of the world are leading to complex humanitarian crises, whereby people affected by AIDS are unable to grow food or work for a living. Moreover, malnourishment weakens the immune system and strength of those affected by HIV/AIDS, making them succumb more quickly to the disease. Similarly, nearly 57 percent of malaria deaths are attributable to malnutrition.

Poverty is a major cause of hunger. Despite the increases in food production brought about by the Green Revolution and the associated declines in food prices, many poor people still cannot afford to buy enough food of sufficient quality in the market place. Their poverty is often associated with macro and micronutrient deficiencies—typically due to limited diets based on basic starchy foods, with little in the way of animal products, vegetables, and fruits, which tend to be more expensive. Ways of improving economic access to sufficient food and to a balanced diet remains a major challenge.

Despite gains in the yields of major food crops, low food production persists in rural areas, especially where agriculture is rainfed. Paradoxically, a high percentage of the world's hungry people are either farmers or others who earn their living in rural areas. The worst affected rural areas are those most remote from markets—or where food production is risky due to economic, environmental, climatic, or other shocks. Poor access to markets means that many farmers are unable to diversify from staple food crops into higher value commodities or add value to their output through processing enterprises. Because of indebtedness, poor grain storage, and the urgent need for cash, many small farmers are forced to sell their crop for a low price after harvest, only later to buy grain in the market at a higher price to feed their families until the next harvest.

### *Who are the hungry?*

The hungry are the poor and the vulnerable. Many of these households are unable to obtain enough food to feed the family. While accurate data are difficult to find, estimates indicate that the majority of hungry people live in rural areas. The task force believes that about half of the hungry are smallholder

**Roughly  
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smallholder  
farm  
households**

farming households unable either to grow or to buy enough food to meet the family's requirements.

Adequate employment opportunities to boost the purchasing power of the poor are seldom available off the farm in poor rural areas. We estimate that roughly two-tenths of the hungry are landless rural people. A smaller group, perhaps one-tenth of the hungry, are pastoralists, fisherfolk, and people who depend on forests for their livelihoods. For them, the conservation of their environment is vital to their nutrition. The remaining share of the hungry, around two-tenths, live in urban areas. Hunger spurs many to leave stagnant and isolated rural economies, migrating to cities where they swell the ranks of the urban poor, many of whom also go hungry, especially when they first arrive.

***Where are the hungry?***

Maps of hunger commonly show which countries have high levels, but not where the concentrations are within a country. As an attempt to show the variation within a country, the task force focused on subnational units (states, provinces, or districts) to identify hunger hotspots. Hunger hotspots are defined as subnational units where the prevalence of underweight children under age five is greater than or equal to 20 percent. Of the 605 subnational units (provinces, states, or districts) analyzed, the task force identified 313 hunger hotspots, where chronic hunger is most persistent and severe. By identifying areas with these high percentages of underweight children, hotspots reveal levels of malnutrition defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) and by the Task Force on Hunger as “high” and “very high.”

- Of 366 subnational units analyzed in Africa, 229 were found to have a prevalence of underweight children under age five of 20 percent or higher. These hunger hotspots contain about 28 million preschool children who are underweight—around 88 percent of Africa's underweight children under age five.
- Of 172 subnational units analyzed in Asia, 76 are considered hunger hotspots. These contain approximately 78 million preschool children who are underweight, or around 95 percent of Asia's underweight children under age five.
- In Latin America and the Caribbean, only 106 subnational units were identified due to limited data; of these, only 8 met the definition as hotspots. These 8 units contain about 400,000 preschool children who are underweight—or around 17 percent of the hungry children in this region.
- Globally, the 313 hunger hotspots identified contain around 107 million preschool children who are underweight—roughly 79 percent of the world's 134 million.

**Hungry people  
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control**

This analysis, when supplemented by additional data, can help identify the priority regions for targeting interventions to end hunger. Poor countries are encouraged to refine the analysis with up-to-date data and to define their own hunger hotspots.

Some 71 countries (of 152 countries that have had at least one nutrition survey since 1990) have insufficient data or no data at all for judging their progress in reducing hunger. This high number is alarming. If governments are committed to the hunger Goal, collecting and monitoring reliable data to measure their progress toward this goal should be a priority. Much more investment is needed to collect both national and subnational data. It is also important to begin to standardize sampling units for population density and size.

***Vulnerability***

Hungry people are highly vulnerable to crises and hazards they cannot control. The crises may be caused by such natural disasters as major droughts or floods or such manmade disasters as war. The hazards include insecure rights to land and other natural resources, lack of improved agricultural technology, inability to store produce after harvest, variations in the weather, widespread environmental degradation, poor health, food shortages, and lack of income-earning opportunities. These elements of vulnerability are the starting point for five of the seven recommendations by the task force. Three key factors—gender inequality, HIV/AIDS, and climate change—exacerbate vulnerability in hungry countries.

Due to existing social inequalities, women are often disproportionately vulnerable to hunger. They produce 60–80 percent of the food in most developing countries and more than 80 percent of the food in Africa. Yet they own only 1 percent of the land and receive only 7 percent of agricultural extension time and resources. While they are responsible for the bulk of agricultural production and most of the household economy, they continue to be bypassed by most agricultural programs. They should be empowered and supported in their multiple roles as food producers, household nutrition managers, marketers and others. Gender equality is not simply socially desirable—it is a central pillar in the fight against hunger.

HIV/AIDS is increasing the vulnerability of millions of chronically hungry households. The interactions of drought, hunger, and AIDS should be better understood by decisionmakers. Agriculture, health, and other sectors should recognize their joint roles and take action together to combat the complex humanitarian crises triggered by HIV/AIDS, applying this report's recommendations in AIDS-affected areas.

The poor and food-insecure are the most vulnerable to the effects of climatic shocks, such as droughts and floods. Climate change is also expected to

**The Task Force on Hunger recommends political action at all levels of society**

disrupt ecosystems and the production of food on a devastating scale in the years ahead.

**The seven recommendations**

The UN Millennium Project focuses on the simple but powerful concept of making the Millennium Development Goals the centerpiece of national poverty reduction strategies supported by international processes. This requires focusing on the Goals as policy targets, with poor countries developing a coherent plan to achieve all the Goals by 2015 and rich countries supporting these plans through policy assistance and financial backing.

The task force is not proposing yet another stand-alone strategy for fighting hunger. Instead, we set forth a plan that forms part of a larger effort to address all the Millennium Development Goals simultaneously. Our report complements the UN Millennium Project recommendations in its report *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals* (UN Millennium Project 2005) as well as the reports of the project's nine other task forces. National governments can incorporate these multiple approaches into Millennium Development Goals-based poverty reduction strategies—strategies that too often underemphasize agriculture and nutrition.

Within the UN Millennium Project's framework for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the task force calls for simultaneous action in seven priority areas (figure 1).

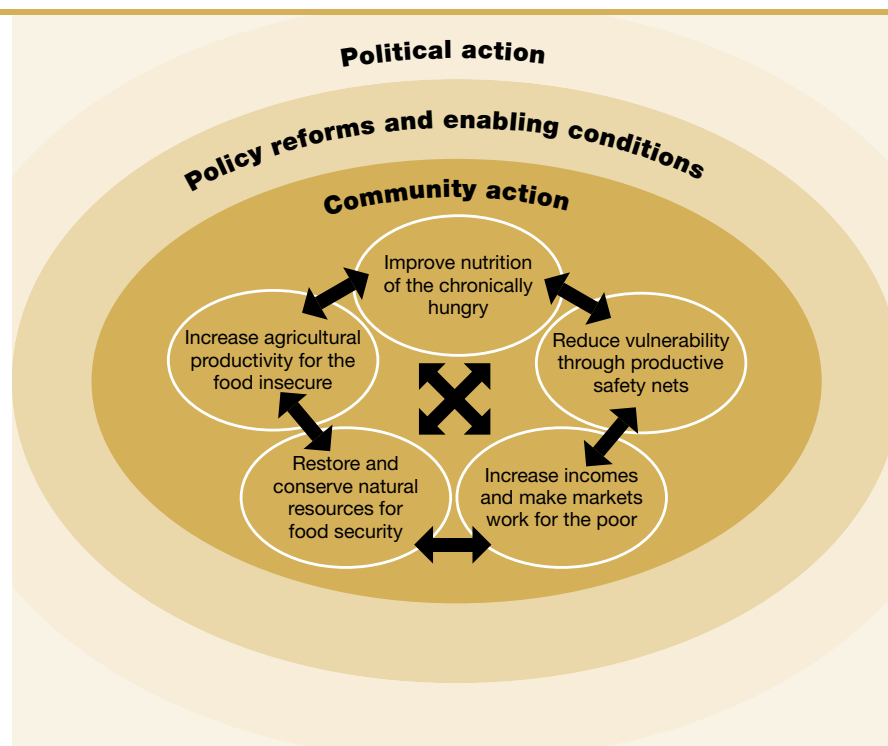
***Global-level interventions***

***Recommendation one: move from political commitment to action***

Political commitments to end hunger, made repeatedly, have not been translated into effective action. All member countries of the United Nations committed to halving world hunger at the World Food Summits of 1996 and 2002, at the Millennium Summit of 2000, at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, and at the 2002 Monterrey Summit on Development Finance. The Task Force on Hunger recommends taking the next step: political action at all levels of society. The recommended interventions in this domain include:

1. Advocate political action to meet intergovernmental agreements to end hunger.
2. Strengthen the contribution of donor countries and developing-country governments to activities that combat hunger.
3. Improve global public awareness of hunger issues and strengthen advocacy organizations committed to ending hunger.
4. Strengthen developing country organizations that deal with hunger alleviation.

**Figure 1**  
Task force  
recommendations at  
the global, national,  
and community scale



5. Improve monitoring and evaluation processes and practices and ensure accountability among those responsible for implementing antihunger programs.

The key message for political leaders is that halving world hunger is well within our means. What has been lacking is action to implement and scale up known solutions. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, reinforced this message in July 2004 when he called for a “uniquely African Green Revolution in the twenty-first century.” It would capitalize on existing knowledge to transform the region’s agriculture, nutrition, and markets—using the pro-poor, pro-women, and pro-environment interventions embedded in this report. Variations of the approach, with greater emphasis on nutrition and markets, apply to parts of Asia and Latin America.

National governments need to be held accountable for the funding and implementation of national programs to address hunger. Establishing measurable indicators of progress and reporting them publicly can help strengthen governance and accountability.

If the hunger Goal is to be met, developed country governments must increase and improve their official development assistance, especially for agriculture and nutrition, and increase attention to capacity building. It is also imperative that they reform their agricultural and trade policies. But despite the need for such reforms, many of the poorest farmers in the developing world are likely to benefit more from the development of domestic and regional markets, at least in the short term. Developing country governments should thus

**Government policies in poor countries can make or break efforts to end hunger**

improve the quality and increase the scale of their national hunger reduction programs, targeting hotspots where the majority of the hungry live. Brazil and China are two good examples of increased political commitment to address hunger problems in their countries. Success is greatest when governments work in partnership with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and local communities to bring about change.

Data from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) show that highly food-insecure countries tend to spend two to three times as much on defense as on agriculture—and that the already low levels of investment in agriculture are declining. This combination of declining investment in agriculture and rising military expenditures is extremely worrying—and a sorry indicator of the real priorities of governments and donor agencies, despite their stated commitments.

Building public awareness of hunger and the issues that surround it can provide political leaders with the mandate and support they need to take action. Antihunger coalitions can articulate arguments for action that are compelling both morally and practically. To build broad public support, it is necessary to create a groundswell of popular opinion at the local level.

Strengthening public advocacy is also necessary in developing countries. Local NGOs can act as facilitators, assisting food-insecure groups in voicing their concerns to government. The strengthening and networking of local community and advocacy groups over the past decade is one of the most promising developments in the struggle against hunger.

Key ingredients in working toward the Millennium Development Goals will be accurate data collection and benchmarks to monitor progress. Developing relevant and robust monitoring and evaluation processes and practices is challenging, not least because of the difficulty of reaching agreement on sound and uniform methodologies.

***National-level interventions***

***Recommendation two: reform policies and create an enabling environment***

Government policies in poor countries can make or break efforts to end hunger. Good governance, including the rule of law, lack of corruption, and respect for human rights, is essential for promoting food security. Policies conducive to ending hunger and poverty need to be put in place at all levels, from the local to the national. The policy reform process needs to be undertaken in partnership with all stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector. The Task Force on Hunger proposes the following interventions:

1. Promote an integrated policy approach to hunger reduction.
2. Restore budgetary priority to the agricultural and rural sectors.
3. Build developing country capacity to achieve the hunger Goal.

**Women's well-being, empowerment, and education are the driving factors in reducing children's malnutrition**

4. Link nutritional and agricultural interventions.
5. Increase poor people's access to land and other productive resources.
6. Empower women and girls.
7. Strengthen agricultural and nutrition research.
8. Remove internal and regional barriers to agricultural trade.
9. Increase the effectiveness of donor agencies' hunger-related programming.
10. Create vibrant partnerships to ensure effective policy implementation.

Poor countries need to adopt a multisectoral approach to the reduction of hunger, since action in any one domain is unlikely to be effective by itself. National poverty reduction strategy processes and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), where they exist, offer the best opportunities for such an approach. The task force recommends that every low-income country integrate the Millennium Development Goals into its poverty reduction strategy or equivalent national planning process.

The task force recommends that African governments invest at least 10 percent of their national budget specifically in agriculture, in addition to making necessary investments in rural energy, infrastructure, health, education, and conservation of natural resources important for food security.

Building local capacity should be the central goal of both national government and donor-funded activities. One possible example of capacity building could be the creation of a corps of paraprofessional extension workers in agriculture, nutrition, and health, residing in villages identified as hunger hotspots.

Linking nutritional and agricultural interventions, so often implemented separately, would also create more effective hunger-reduction programs. Increasing poor people's access to productive resources is essential for their food security. Clearly assigned and enforceable rights to own, inherit, and trade land must be established, particularly for women. Innovative tenure arrangements, such as community property rights, can also be effective.

Women's well-being, empowerment, and education are the driving factors in reducing children's malnutrition. Political leaders at all levels should work with community groups to empower women through legal, policy, and institutional reforms. Women and girls need better access to such services as credit, healthcare, and education. It is important to develop and introduce technology and farm implements designed for rural women that will ease their workload, such as water harvesting technologies, trees for firewood grown close to home, and implements that minimize tillage.

Agricultural research has been a major driver of hunger reduction. The task force recommends doubling investments in national research to at least 2 percent of agricultural GDP by 2010. We also recommend that donors increase funding to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) to \$1 billion by 2010.

**Making  
mineral  
fertilizers  
available at  
affordable  
prices and  
using them  
efficiently  
remain major  
challenges**

The international community has an important role in removing trade barriers, to allow poor farmers access to developed country agricultural markets. Developing countries could also do more to promote cross-border trade at the regional level.

Donor agencies also have to increase the effectiveness of hunger-related programs. Shared country-level coordination mechanisms, agreements on common monitoring procedures, and systems for sharing results and knowledge are some of the modest steps that could make a difference.

*Community-level interventions*

***Recommendation three: increase the agricultural productivity of food-insecure farmers***

Small-scale farming families represent about half the hungry worldwide and probably three-quarters of the hungry in Africa. Raising the productivity of their crops, trees, and livestock is a major priority in the fight against hunger. It is also vital to enhance and sustain the productivity of forests and fisheries, which provide the livelihoods of significant proportions of hungry people. The interventions recommended in this domain are:

1. Improve soil health.
2. Improve and expand small-scale water management.
3. Improve access to better seeds and planting materials.
4. Diversify on-farm enterprises with high-value products.
5. Establish effective extension services.

Restoring health to the soil is often the first entry point for increasing agricultural productivity, especially in Africa. This can be done by applying appropriate combinations of mineral and organic fertilizers, using green manures to improve soil fertility, planting fertilizer trees, returning crop residues to the soil, and using improved methods of soil erosion control and water conservation.

Making mineral fertilizers available at affordable prices and using them efficiently remain major challenges. The task force believes that in critical situations, targeted subsidy programs should be carefully designed to supply both mineral and organic fertilizers to highly food-insecure farmers. Tamper-proof “smart cards,” redeemable at private agrodealers, are a promising way of administering targeted subsidies and avoiding the inefficiencies of past subsidy programs. These programs require a long-term commitment to ensure economic growth, but should include a sunset clause so that the subsidies are gradually phased out over a given number of years, say 5–10 years, depending on the local conditions.

In the dry subhumid and semiarid tropics and subtropics, improving water availability can be just as important as improving soil fertility, if not more so. Various water harvesting and small-scale irrigation techniques can trans-

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fight against  
hunger**

form crop and livestock production in these zones. Water-related interventions depend heavily on developing the social capital to manage them at community level; solutions that rely on technology alone are unlikely to succeed.

Genetically superior crops, tree varieties, and improved animal breeds can greatly increase the productivity of small farms. The task force supports both conventional breeding and transgenic research with appropriate biosafety measures. Tolerance of such stresses as drought, salinity, poor soil fertility, pests, and diseases will benefit farmers in the more marginal areas. Early maturing varieties are especially useful in drought-prone areas. There has recently been some exciting progress in developing dual-purpose food/feed crops that enable farmers to diversify into livestock production without jeopardizing their short-term food security.

After farmers attain food security, they can begin to diversify their farming systems toward the production of high-value products. Livestock, farm trees, aquaculture, and vegetables are attractive options for small-scale farmers to diversify their diets and sources of income—and for improving the stability and sustainability of their farming enterprise. Increases in milk production, for example, can reduce malnutrition in both rural and urban settings. Recent growth in the smallholder timber sector suggests that smallholders could emerge as major timber suppliers of the twenty-first century.

Breathing new life into the moribund extension services of many developing countries is vital if the benefits of new knowledge and improved technology are to reach farmers. Despite the many shortcomings of conventional extension services, there are good extension practices and practitioners to help others learn. The task force recommends that every village in a hunger hotspot have extension workers trained in agriculture, together with counterparts in health. One of the most impressive track records is that of farmer field schools in Southeast Asia. This approach is now being developed for use in areas other than integrated pest management, such as soil and water conservation and livestock production.

***Recommendation four: improve nutrition for the chronically hungry and vulnerable***

Adequate nutrition lies at the heart of the fight against hunger. A targeted life-cycle approach is recommended to reduce the prevalence of underweight children, reduce stunting, and ensure adequate micronutrients for those suffering from vitamin and mineral deficiencies. Particular attention should go to children under the age of two and to supplemental feeding for pregnant and lactating mothers. The five interventions recommended in this domain are:

1. Promote mother and infant nutrition.
2. Reduce malnutrition among children under five years of age.
3. Reduce malnutrition among school-age children and adolescents.
4. Reduce vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

**All feeding programs should be sourced, where possible, from locally produced foods rather than imported food aid**

5. Reduce the prevalence of infectious diseases that contribute to malnutrition.

As the primary care providers for children and families, women are particularly important in improving nutrition for vulnerable groups. Ensuring universal access to reproductive health services is essential for improving the nutritional status of pregnant women and their children, particularly through the proper spacing of births. Increasing women's income and their control over family assets is also known to improve the nutritional status of their children. To promote community awareness and action in this field, the task force recommends improving both formal networks of paraprofessional nutrition extension workers and informal self-help and mother-to-mother groups of nutrition and health volunteers at the village level.

To break the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition, the task force recommends direct actions focused on supplemental feeding for underweight pregnant and nursing mothers. Exclusive breastfeeding up to six months of age is the best way of ensuring optimum nutrition for babies. Systems need to be put in place to raise awareness of this. But the risk of transmitting HIV through breast milk complicates the decisions women must make to ensure good nutrition for their babies. To reduce malnutrition among malnourished children under five, the task force recommends providing fortified or blended complementary foods, as well as therapeutic care for all seriously malnourished children and women, especially in remote rural areas.

The task force recommends that all feeding programs be sourced, where possible, from locally produced foods rather than imported food aid. These foods can be fortified with micronutrients as needed. School feeding programs can generate synergies with learning, attracting and retaining girls in schools, and opportunities for stimulating local market demand (on the order of a 25 percent increase for maize in Sub-Saharan Africa). Take-home rations can provide an effective economic incentive for poor families to send and keep their children, especially girls, in schools. Comprehensive community- and school-based feeding programs that offer systematic deworming, micronutrient supplementation, education on HIV/AIDS, health, nutrition, and hygiene, safe cooking facilities, drinking water, and improved sanitation can be an excellent platform for improving schools, keeping children healthy, and reaching the community.

Vitamin and mineral intake can be improved by increasing the consumption of micronutrient-rich foods, improving food fortification, and increasing micronutrient supplementation when necessary. All three of these mutually reinforcing actions should be promoted by village extension workers. Countries should give a high priority to promoting the local production of micronutrient-rich foods, such as vegetables and fruits. Both the public and private sectors can do much in developing and supplying fortified foods. Another option is the biofortification of food crops through research, an area that merits more attention.

**Developing countries and the international community need to build and strengthen emergency response systems**

Parallel health measures are also needed to eliminate diseases that rob people of nutrients. All children should be fully immunized and receive prompt treatment for common infections such as diarrhea, pneumonia, malaria, and intestinal parasites. The Task Force on Hunger fully supports the recommendations of the Working Group on HIV/AIDS, including measures to ensure appropriate nutritional care for people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS.

***Recommendation five: reduce the vulnerability of the acutely hungry through productive safety nets***

Hungry people are vulnerable to events and influences that they cannot control. These include natural disasters, armed conflicts, catastrophic illness, and political and economic instability. While investing in agriculture, education, and health remains critical to long-term food security, past gains can be threatened if people's vulnerability to short-term disasters and shocks is not tackled head on. The task force recommends the following interventions in this domain:

1. Build and strengthen national and local early warning systems, including advances in climate prediction at the hotspot level.
2. Build and strengthen the capacity to respond to emergencies.
3. Invest in productive safety nets to protect the poorest from short-term shocks and to reduce longer term food insecurity.

Mainstreaming the management of vulnerability to shocks and disasters will allow governments to protect and perhaps even enhance the returns to their investments in long-term development. That means increasing the ability to predict shocks and disasters—and to respond to them quickly when they occur. It also means managing post-crisis investments better, so that they generate assets that take people beyond where they were before the crisis.

The task force recommends that national governments, in partnership with the international community, strengthen their early warning systems, especially for hunger hotspots and pastoralist areas, many of which are often inadequately covered. Early warning systems need to be fairly sophisticated to be effective; the key to effectiveness is knowing when to intervene.

Developing countries and the international community need to build and strengthen emergency response systems. Multiyear budgeting and increased funding for organizations, such as the UN's Immediate Response Account, will help meet the escalating needs for humanitarian relief. The task force recommends that donors, where possible and appropriate, provide cash instead of food aid for relief efforts so that governments can invest more flexibly in reducing hunger among people at risk. The additional resources needed to reduce vulnerability to shocks must not be found by drawing funds away from long-term development.

Better links are needed between actions aimed at overcoming chronic malnutrition and programs addressing acute malnutrition. The successes of relief

**Networks of trained rural agrodealers are recommended as a means of reaching remote areas**

agencies in refugee camps need to be replicated and scaled up in the broader community during post-emergency recovery periods. One novel approach is community therapeutic care, which emphasizes treating malnourished children at home rather than in rehabilitation centers.

Safety nets should be an effective protector of last resort during shocks and an economically productive tool during noncrisis years. This involves investing in community activities that reduce vulnerability while increasing productivity. Examples include community food banks and the rehabilitation of degraded environments through food-for-work or cash-for-work schemes. If not properly implemented, large injections of cash or food aid can have a distorting effect on a local economy. Therefore, synergistic interventions based on long-term development objectives, such as programs that increase food access through interventions in the labor market, should form an important guiding principle in the design of safety nets.

***Recommendation six: increase incomes and make markets work for the poor***

The food-insecure either cannot produce enough food themselves or cannot afford to buy food. Properly functioning markets are critical in ensuring that people are able to earn an income, obtain the inputs they need to raise crop yields, and sell their produce at fair prices. The interventions proposed in this domain are:

1. Invest in and maintain market-related infrastructure.
2. Develop networks of small rural input traders.
3. Improve access to financial services for the poor and food-insecure.
4. Provide a sound legal and regulatory framework.
5. Strengthen the bargaining power of rural and urban poor in labor markets.
6. Ensure access to market information for the poor.
7. Promote and strengthen farmers' and community associations.
8. Promote alternative sources of employment and income.

Markets will not develop without public investment in transport and other infrastructure. A major campaign is needed to increase road-building, including paved roads and all-weather feeder roads, in large parts of Africa and also in parts of Asia and Latin America where there are high densities of poverty. Every village should have a vehicle capable of transporting products for sale and helping in health emergencies. Effective grain storage capacity at the local level will enable farmers to obtain fairer prices for their surpluses and reduce post-harvest losses to pests and fungi. Investments in small-scale processing should quickly yield benefits in increased employment opportunities at the local level.

Networks of trained rural agrodealers are recommended as a means of reaching remote areas with agricultural inputs, especially in Africa. The lack of working capital for traders, credit for farmers, and technical knowledge are the

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markets be-  
coming domi-  
nant buyers  
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sue socially  
responsible  
policies**

three main drawbacks that must be overcome for this approach to work. The private sector, through these agrodealers, would implement targeted voucher programs for soil health and water resources.

Access to credit and other financial services is a particular problem for food-insecure farmers. A system of loan guarantees could provide incentives for poor people to take the risk of borrowing and for financial institutions to lend to poor people. The amounts often exceed microcredit limits, so several mechanisms will be required. Community groups established to borrow on behalf of their members can mitigate risk and make lending more attractive to financial institutions. A promising possibility is to integrate loans with saving services, allowing members to save regularly in small amounts.

Unequal bargaining power between producers and traders, exploitative behavior by companies, and uncertainties over the quality standards required of farmers complicate the transition from subsistence to commercial farming. A properly enforced system of grades and standards is especially important in overcoming such problems. Contract law should be enforced, preferably at the community level with community mediation and arbitration. In this and related areas, the government's primary responsibility is to provide a business-friendly legal and regulatory framework—together with the public goods that will create the incentives for private traders and businesses to establish and operate.

The poor are often forced to accept work at very low wages. Promoting the nonfarm sector will help raise wages by providing alternative employment opportunities. The task force recommends that organizations and programs that empower the rural landless and urban poor in labor markets be strengthened. Labor groups or cooperatives may be able to negotiate higher wages, particularly when they are needed to perform such time-critical jobs as harvesting.

A lack of market information worsens the terms of trade for poor farmers, and access to modern information technology is still rudimentary in many rural areas. But the pace of change is accelerating: governments and donors are investing in Internet technology, and combinations of technology, such as mobile phones, radios, and the Internet are being assembled to bring information to producers. Fishermen in India are now using mobile phones to seek the best price from dealers before deciding where to sell their catch.

Since most of the world's poor and hungry live in rural areas and are already engaged in agriculture, there are significant opportunities for increasing their incomes by encouraging them to gradually shift from food crops to higher value outputs, such as livestock products, and to add value through processing. Out-grower schemes, where farmers grow crops for large producers, can provide important employment opportunities for the poor. But having associations of smallholders enter high-value markets independent of large producers is more likely to increase the share of the final price that small-scale farmers obtain. With supermarkets becoming dominant buyers in many poor countries, gov-

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ernments should provide incentives for them to pursue socially responsible policies and stimulate local smallholder production.

***Recommendation seven: restore and conserve the natural resources essential for food security***

The degradation of natural resources, sometimes associated with reduced biodiversity, directly threatens the food security and incomes of poor people. Reversing degradation requires both community and national interventions, supported by inputs from the international community. The interventions recommended in this domain include:

1. Help communities and households restore or enhance natural resources.
2. Secure local ownership, access, and management rights to forests, fisheries, and rangelands.
3. Develop natural resource-based “green enterprises.”
4. Pay poor farmers for the environmental services they provide.

To achieve the greatest early impact, the task force recommends targeting investments to degraded areas where hungry people are densely concentrated.

Community-based initiatives for environmental restoration may include rangeland rehabilitation, watershed restoration, establishing village ponds, restoring the vegetation of stream banks, and building vegetative filters and barriers to protect water quality. Biodiversity can be protected by establishing reserves, reforestation of degraded areas, and reconstituting fisheries. Key principles for success include building ownership of initiatives among all community members and ensuring short-term gains in food security in addition to long-term sustainability.

Credible rights to land, water, forests, and fisheries are vital for facilitating investment in conservation and restoration. Many countries have legislation to enable rural communities and households to obtain such rights, but institutional constraints hamper effective implementation in many cases. Legal support services are needed to enable the poor to bring claims where their rights are denied. Media campaigns can raise awareness.

“Green enterprises” can generate valuable opportunities to generate income and strengthen livelihoods while establishing incentives to conserve. Such enterprises may trade in natural medicines, nontimber forest products, sustainably grown or certified timber, and other natural products. Success depends on fostering a combination of skills in conservation, business, and management. Access to markets is also key.

Programs providing payments to low-income rural communities for environmental services, though still at an early stage of development, hold significant potential. They include payment for biodiversity protection, watershed protection or restoration, and carbon sequestration. Since many ecosystem services are public goods, government intervention is usually required to create a functioning market.

**The task force  
advocates  
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emphasis on  
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stakeholder  
approaches**

***Implementing the seven recommendations***

There have been many plans for ending hunger, but implementation has often been ineffective or incomplete. Because hunger is such a complex problem, the task force advocates a new emphasis on multisectoral and multistakeholder approaches that tackle the problem simultaneously, comprehensively, and in an integrated manner. The key principles to underpin implementation of hunger reduction programs include:

*Identifying priority interventions.* Within the seven broad recommendations presented in this report, there are 40 proposed interventions. Not every intervention will be appropriate to every country or district. An important step at the national level will be to identify the priority interventions for the conditions that prevail locally. For example, low food production caused by insufficient agricultural productivity is likely to be the primary reason for hunger in tropical Africa and remote parts of Asia and Latin America, while poverty is considered to be the primary reason for hunger in South and East Asia, Latin America, Central Asia, and the Middle East.

*Developing a national strategy.* Where national strategies do not exist, the key elements for their formulation include broad participation by stakeholders, including the private sector, NGOs, and donor agencies; thorough analysis of the scope and typologies of hunger at the national level, including identification of hunger hotspots; sound policy design and the integration of the Millennium Development Goals into existing national poverty reduction strategies or, where they exist, PRSPs; and a participatory and transparent monitoring process.

*Strengthening capacity.* Many of the task force's recommended interventions depend on building national and local capacity. Donors and national governments will need to make long-term commitments to strengthening human, technical, managerial, and institutional capacity at all levels. Capacity building, as one of the key entry points, needs to start immediately.

*Adopting a multistakeholder approach.* Without local action, efforts to achieve the Goals will remain top-down, supply-driven—and ineffective. All stakeholders need to be involved, particularly local community members, which will require considerable investment in the training of facilitators. Issues of gender equality should form a central component of all community action processes. The private sector can help in addressing the hunger Goal by providing affordable products and services, building links with and among local businesses, creating employment opportunities, building local capacity, supporting government efforts to attract foreign investment, and building the domestic private sector.

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### *Investments needed*

The UN Millennium Project estimates that interventions to increase agricultural productivity and reduce chronic hunger will cost, on average, about 5–8 percent of the total costs of achieving the Millennium Development Goals in five low-income countries (UN Millennium Project 2005). This is modest in comparison with the average investments needed in education (16 percent), health (25 percent), energy (15 percent), and roads (18 percent).

### *Synergistic entry points*

Most of the interventions detailed in this report act synergistically—in other words, when two or more are combined, the overall effect is greater than the sum of their individual effects. Interventions may also be synergistic in the sense that they address the hunger problem in more than one way—or trigger additional innovations that further strengthen antihunger efforts and those of other Millennium Development Goals. The task force identifies three local initiatives as “entry points” in the battle against hunger: community nutrition programs, homegrown school feeding programs, and investments in soil health and water. All three will need to be tailored to local conditions, combined with policy changes, regulatory reforms, and national and local incentives.

A combination of the three interventions may constitute an attractive new integrated program in rural areas facing the dual challenge of high chronic malnutrition and low agricultural productivity. Community nutrition and homegrown school feeding programs can be initiated in tandem with basic investments in soil and water. The increased local production will have a ready market in the homegrown feeding programs. The resulting synergies of better education outcomes (particularly for girls), greater agricultural production and incomes, and improved nutrition for mothers and babies will address a community’s hunger from multiple angles—opening the way for other interventions.

### **“It can be done”**

The conclusion of the task force is that the hunger Goal can be achieved and that hunger can eventually be eliminated from the face of the earth. Achieving that goal will require focused and unprecedented levels of effort from all actors. But it is well within the reach of human capabilities. The world has made progress in reducing hunger, but not quickly or broadly enough. As this report goes to press, more than 5.5 million children are dying of malnutrition-related causes each year. The actions outlined in this report, taken up by a broad coalition of stakeholders and applied in every country, can change that.