

STATEMENT

AGENDA 2030 MUST NOT BE SIDELINED

How can the German government use the High-Level Political Forum and the Summit of the Future to make progress on "SDG 2 - Zero Hunger"?

Berlin/Bonn, July 2024

The 2030 Agenda is the best and most ambitious plan toward a future worth living. At the mid-term mark of the Agenda, there has been minimal progress on "SDG 2 - Zero Hunger" in terms of child malnutrition, but no progress on chronic hunger. In the first few years, the international community showed little ambition in terms of implementing the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) - and major shocks have occurred since 2020: The coronavirus pandemic; the war against Ukraine; and increasingly severe consequences of climate change with dramatic effects for food insecure countries. Now the global community, including the German government, is facing larger and more costly problems with SDG 2 than in 2015. And the 2030 Agenda threatens to become sidelined again after the highly visible United Nations (UN) mid-term summit in 2023.

But this year, the German government can—and must—inject new momentum into the 2030 Agenda: the imminent approach of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and the Summit of the Future are great opportunities to optimize these efforts.

WHAT ABOUT "ZERO HUNGER"?

Only 12% of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their sub-goals are on track - and there is no progress on the path toward the "Zero Hunger" goal. According to estimates, there will be even more chronically hungry people in absolute terms in 2030 than in 2015 when the agenda was adopted: more than 600 million people.

The consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and the war of aggression against Ukraine have contributed to this. But droughts, floods, conflicts and displacement are also destroying parts of the food system. As most countries affected by hunger are unable to or have invested little in rural development, these shocks have hit them particularly hard and with increasing frequency. It is difficult for the populations in these countries to build up resilience and food crises ensue. Examples of this are South Sudan, but also Haiti, Yemen, Ethiopia and Somalia¹.

In acute food crises, rapid, targeted and ideally anticipatory humanitarian action is essential. The growing global need for humanitarian aid² is being recognized and, despite massive cuts, is strongly supported by donor countries. Unfortunately, too little money is available for

the sustainable transformation of food systems and other measures to achieve the SDGs. As shown in the 31st Kompass, the report on the reality of German development policy by Welthungerhilfe and terre des hommes, the budget for rural development and food security in Germany fell by over 30% in 2023.

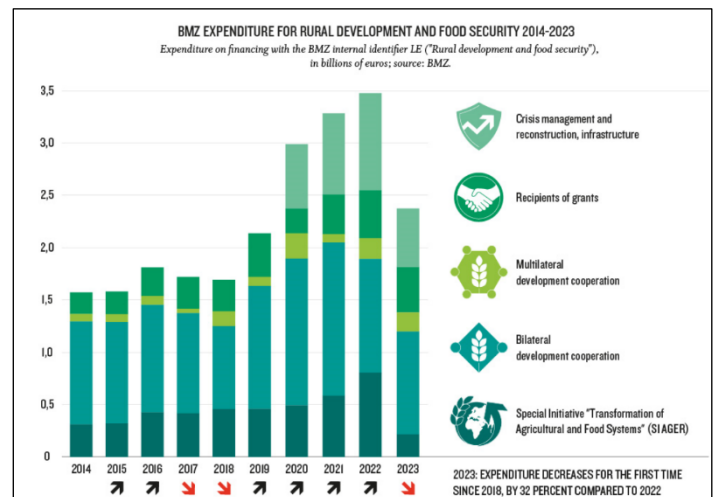


Figure 1: BMZ expenditure on rural development and food security 2014-2023³

To gain more attention and commitment for rural development, states and decision-makers with political ambition and the will to turn words into action and money are needed.

Mid-2023, as the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was still far from completion, UN Secretary-General António Guterres called for a so-called stimulus of additional USD 500 billion annually to finance the achievement of the goals. This was also welcomed by the member states. Whether and how this sum will be realized is unclear. If the German government is serious about implementing the 2030 Agenda, it must visibly take the agenda off the sidelines and address this financial demand, fulfill its own share and motivate other countries to follow suit.

Inaction is becoming increasingly expensive. The latest calculations by the Center for Development Research (ZEF) at the University of Bonn show that it is now three times more expensive to end hunger by 2030 than it was in 2020. Instead of an additional USD 30 billion per year, the estimate is now USD 93 billion⁴.

NEW MOMENTUM FOR SDG 2

Germany and all signatory states have a responsibility to adhere to the 2030 Agenda and drive it forward. The German government must therefore make the best possible use of the existing multilateral forums: The HLPF and the Summit of the Future can make important contributions to achieving the 2030 Agenda and give SDG 2 new momentum:

The **High-Level Political Forum**, an annual event held in New York, is the only international gathering that reviews the progress of the 2030 Agenda. Each year, the UN focuses on different SDGs - in 2024 (July 8-17) it will be SDG 2, among others. The entire forum will deal with "Zero Hunger" in speeches, side events and Voluntary National Reports (VNRs). Germany must seize this moment and review its own commitment to SDG 2.

For years, the HLPF has had a reputation as a weak forum: It receives little attention from the press and civil society and ministers or even heads of state and government rarely appear. More high-profile participation or even financial commitments from the German delegation would draw more attention to SDG 2 and set an example for other countries.

The **UN Summit of the Future**, which will take place in September 2024, already released a high-caliber line-up - German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has announced his attendance, as has Development Minister Svenja Schulze. Here, the member states have set out to sign the Pact of the Future, which intends to define how the UN is to be strengthened in order to simultaneously drive forward the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and make the UN

fit for the future.

Whether the pact goes down in history as a success or failure depends on the outcome of the negotiations. Anything is possible, from a minimal consensus that has the potential to water down the 2030 Agenda to an actual major reform of the UN structure with a lasting, accelerating impact on the 2030 Agenda. The second version of the pact lays out concrete actions in relation to the fulfillment and financing of the 2030 Agenda, such as the renewed commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the principle of "Leave no one behind." This part of the pact also explicitly stipulates the SDG stimulus of additional USD 500 billion annually to achieve SDG: Food systems should be transformed for people and planet in a way that ensures safe, affordable, and nutritious food for all.

For these points to have a chance of becoming reality, the final pact must not fall short of the above-mentioned goals. In addition, donor countries must drive forward financing for the 2030 Agenda. To do so, they must make funds available themselves and be open to reforming the international financial architecture. Regarding SDG 2, the omission of the **right to adequate food** is a critical oversight. Including this would ensure the human rights perspective, underline the state obligation to implement it and emphasize once again that no one should be left behind on the path to achieving SDG 2.

References:

¹ WFP and FAO. 2024. hunger hotspots. FAO-WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity: June to October 2024 Outlook. Rome.

² UNOCHA (2023) Global Humanitarian Overview

³ Figure 1: Welthungerhilfe, terres des hommes (2024). Kompass - On the reality of German development policy 2024, p.13

⁴ von Braun, Chichaibelu, Laborde, Torero Cullen & Baumüller (2024). Ending Hunger by 2030: ZEF Policy Brief No. 48

Political demands

The German government must:

Agenda 2030 and the HLPF 2024:

- stand by the 2030 Agenda and the political declaration of the 2023 mid-term summit, make a strong commitment to further implementation and actively call on other countries to follow suit;
- ensure high-caliber participation in the HLPF and drive forward an ambitious final declaration;
- invest in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda even in a difficult budgetary situation - and contribute to the annual stimulus of additional USD 500 billion called for by the UN Secretary-General to achieve the 2030 Agenda;
- focus on the implementation of SDG 2 and the transformation of the food system - because these are the catalysts for the implementation of the entire agenda.

Summit of the Future:

- adhere to the points in the current draft of the Pact of the Future on the transformation of food systems and the fulfillment and financing of the 2030 Agenda;
- advocate the inclusion of the right to adequate food in the Pact of the Future.

For further information or queries:

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