



Policy recommendations of the “Partners for change” network meeting

At the halfway mark of the 2030 Agenda, some 200 partners from government, private sector, civil society, farmer organizations and science who are involved in the BMZ special initiative "Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems" came together for a comprehensive consultation process. They drew up the following joint political recommendations for action on transforming agricultural and food systems to achieve a food-secure, resilient, and sustainable future.

- To effectively address multiple crises and promote diverse and healthy diets, it is essential to adopt holistic approaches to resilience. This involves implementing policies that are nationally owned and aimed at fostering diversified and sustainable local agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries production. Additionally, to reduce vulnerability to shocks, it is important to include policies on disaster preparedness and management. For developing countries, it is imperative that all donor interventions be in alignment with the national transformation pathway, considering the local context, natural resource management, and sustainability.
- Achieving holistic food systems transformation requires a multisectoral approach, e.g., creating synergies between agriculture, health, nutrition, governance, climate, and biodiversity. Policies must be informed by inclusive dialogue among all relevant actors, including farmer organizations, rural communities, government, and local stakeholders. Coherence across all levels and sectors is paramount. Incentives and well-directed subsidies should be used as important levers to stimulate sustainable production and to promote the adoption of agroecological and environmentally-friendly practices.
- Evidence-based policy making is essential to overcome existing restrictive framework conditions, particularly for marginalized groups.
- Accommodating the needs of vulnerable groups requires changes in our current policies, but also in the mindsets of every single one of us. It is crucial to foster strong and functioning institutions that implement inclusive policies. Farmers and local communities, particularly women, young people, and other vulnerable groups, should be actively integrated into agricultural policy development.
- To strengthen rural areas, it is crucial to take a holistic, cross-sector approach that focuses on rural needs and perspectives and overcomes urban-biased policies and inadequate legal and policy frameworks. Rural transformation can be supported by ensuring equitable access to productive resources and employment for all through inclusive, multi-stakeholder, youth-driven and gender-responsive policies, structures, implementation, and financing. Grassroots organisations can play a central role in this process as the preferred vehicle for long-lasting and sustainable socio-economic development and environmental transformation. It is crucial to promote jobs and income based on climate-smart and eco-friendly economic activities, diversification of business models, and fair working conditions. Strengthening transparent, responsible, inclusive, and accountable governance is necessary to close gaps in the rights, resources, and representation of marginalised groups and to unleash their potential for sustainable rural development.

- Soil conservation and restoration play a transformative role in achieving sustainable agriculture, land use, and food systems. Recognizing the interrelated nature of the SDGs, efforts should focus on healthy soils and landscapes to ensure food security, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and inclusive agricultural growth and poverty reduction. It is necessary to sustainably manage soils and land, restore ecosystems, rehabilitate degraded land and soils, and achieve land degradation neutrality. Equitable access to land, long-term finance, information on government policies, subsidies and investments, local soil data and appropriate diversified practices and technologies should be ensured, especially for female and young farmers and other marginalized groups.
- Fostering healthy and sustainable food environments requires cross-sectoral policy packages that regulate and incentivize the production of health promoting foods and beverages in a socially fair and environmentally sustainable way. It is important to create conducive food environments, e. g. through the limitation of opportunities to promote foods and beverages associated with unhealthy and unsustainable diets. Significant resource allocation and inclusive governance mechanisms are critical for reshaping food environments and realizing the right to adequate food. Strengthening local food environments that contribute to healthy and sustainable diets is essential, along with empowering communities, particularly marginalized groups, through education, social safety nets, training, and capacity development.
- Integration of innovation and technology in national policies is vital for agricultural development. This entails including tailored digital information and services based on agricultural research and partnerships. National investments in standardized modern data infrastructure and human resource development, with reduced dependency on external funding, are crucial. Evidence-based policies and programs, along with reliable, accessible, and disaggregated data, are key inputs for informed policies and rural transformation.
- Equitable, secure, and sustainable access to land and natural resources is a precondition for sustainable rural development. Consequently, policies should ensure equitable access to productive resources, to financial services and employment and include stakeholders, especially young people, in a gender-transformative approach. Knowledge and data on innovative financing options that do not necessarily require land titles or collateral should be developed. Instead, inclusive digital solutions for access to land and finance should be implemented.
- We should diversify agri-food markets and engage actively in rules-based and fair regional trade to reduce one-sided import dependencies for increased resilience. To achieve this, the following activities are important: first, strengthen producer and trader associations, support local production and consumption of indigenous and adapted crops, and empower marginalized groups, poor farmers, women, and youth in value chains and trade. Second, set-up and enhance digital information systems for more transparent and robust data on supply and demand for evidence-based supply chain and market interventions and policy design that effectively increase the competitiveness of agri-food markets.

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