



Food security policies:



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Key points

Food security policies are essential for ensuring that all people have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. This involves addressing the complex interplay of economic, social, and environmental factors that influence food availability, access, and utilization.

Key points include the need for integrated policies that consider the entire food system, from production to consumption. This includes promoting sustainable agricultural practices, strengthening food systems resilience, and ensuring that policies are inclusive and equitable, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Effective food security policies require strong governance and institutional arrangements. This involves clear roles and responsibilities for government, the private sector, and civil society. Additionally, policies should be based on evidence and regularly updated to reflect changing circumstances and emerging challenges.

Finally, food security policies should be part of a broader strategy for sustainable development. This includes addressing the root causes of food insecurity, such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation, and promoting the well-being of all people.

BACKGROUND

The world is facing a complex and interconnected set of challenges that threaten food security and nutrition. These include rapid population growth, increasing demand for food, and the impacts of climate change, which are exacerbating food insecurity and malnutrition.

According to the 2015 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report, approximately 820 million people were undernourished in 2014, up from 777 million in 2010. This represents a significant increase in the number of people who do not have enough to eat, highlighting the urgent need for action.

Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that goes beyond simply increasing food production. It involves strengthening food systems, improving access to food, and ensuring that food is safe and nutritious. This requires coordinated action across different sectors and at multiple scales, from local to global.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Food security:

Availability, Access, Utilization, Stability

THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF FOOD SECURITY

Food security can be thought of as comprising four dimensions:

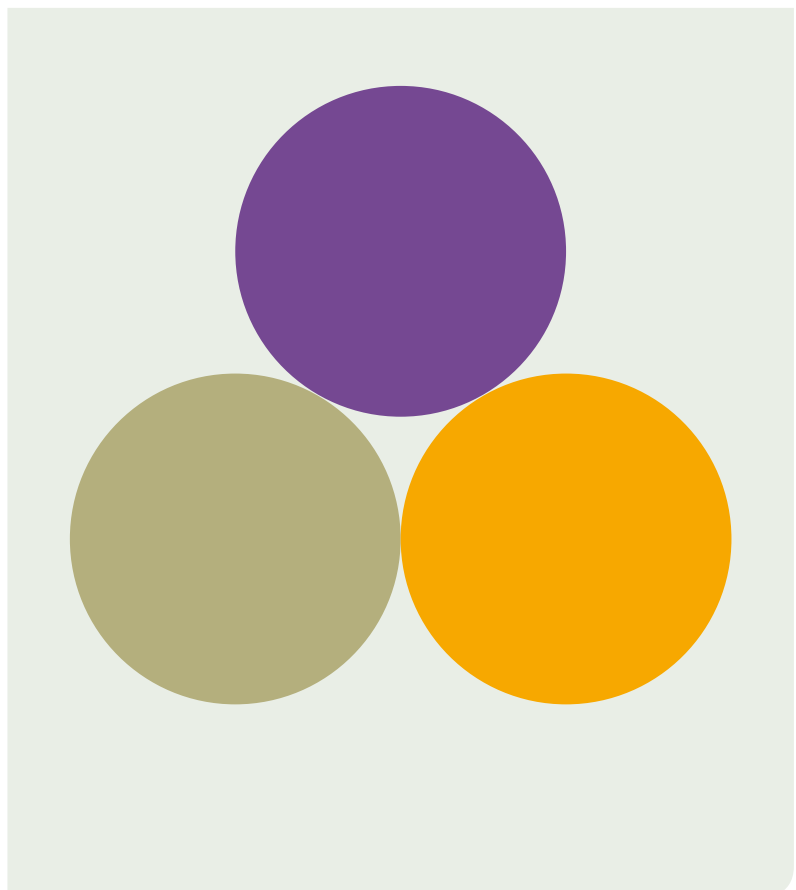
➔ **AVAILABILITY:** sufficient quantities of food are available through local production or imports.

➔ **ACCESS:** all people have adequate resources to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet.

➔ **UTILIZATION:** people use food products in a way that provides them with sufficient nutrients.

➔ **STABILITY:** food availability, access, and utilization are stable over time.

Only when all four of these dimensions are fulfilled simultaneously can an individual, household, community or nation achieve food security.





This is the crux of the matter: ecosystem degradation and weak ecosystem governance can undermine the effectiveness and impacts of food security policies, while inappropriate policies can damage ecosystems and their ability to support food systems.

AVAILABILITY OF FOOD

Wild animal and plant foods provide vital calories as well as much-needed protein and micronutrients to more than a billion people around the world. Fish, for example, provide more than 1.5 billion people with 20 percent of their average per capita intake of animal protein. Bushmeat in the Congo Basin alone feeds nearly one hundred million people – both urban and rural dwellers – and is important in many other forested regions of the world. Some indigenous people (such as hunter-gatherer forest people) are entirely dependent on

WILD FOODS – A CRITICAL RESOURCE FOR THE POOR

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UTILIZATION OF FOOD

• The rural and urban poor in developing countries depend on natural biomass (particularly rewood and charcoal) for cooking as well as heating. Access to fuelwood expands the choice and range of foods that are used, including important protein sources such as beans and meat that require higher levels of energy for preparation. Loss of access to these fuels, through deforestation or

DEFORESTATION AFFECTS FOOD USE

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Inequitable tenure

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Climate change

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... .. Guidelines on Tenure (see box below)

GUIDELINES FOR GOOD TENURE GOVERNANCE

Policy-makers responsible for food security, as well as tenure and other environmental governance issues, can benefit from the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests produced by the UN Committee on World Food Security. The guidelines are based on a set of general principles that seek to ensure that states recognize and respect all “legitimate” existing tenure rights. This includes safeguarding such rights, promoting and facilitating enjoyment of these rights, and access to justice to resolve infringements or disputes over these rights.

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