

Strengthen value chains to overcome the zero hunger challenge

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The way we frame a problem determines the solutions we get. Hunger is a global epidemic that is effecting communities worldwide. When people talk about hunger – they believe that hunger stems from a lack of food. If we say that hunger is from a lack of food then the answer is obvious – get people something to eat. But if we ask what is at the root of hunger then the answer is far more complicated and less easy to respond to. The global food production is enough to feed every single human being on the planet and still there are approximately 815 million people globally who suffer from chronic under nourishment. India produces enough food to feed all its citizens, yet it is ranked 100 among 119 countries in the Global Hunger Index rankings.

Key words: Value-chains, Zero hunger

INDIA wastes about 7 percent of its total annual food production. Some of this food rots at warehouses awaiting transportation and some of it rots in the fields because the farmers don't think it is economical to harvest or sell at the nearest *mandi* (local market). Almost 30 percent of the fruits and vegetables in India is wasted and does not reach the final destination because of the lack of warehouse and cold storages. The situation is not very different in other countries too. In Africa, it is estimated that the food that is wasted can feed close to 40 million people.

Hunger is increasingly a processing, storage, supply chain and logistics problem.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) developed by the United Nations (UN) tries to frame questions related to some of the most pressing global challenges. The SDG2 (*Zero Hunger*) is a multi-dimension goal that integrates and links food security, nutrition, and sustainable and climate resilient agriculture. Ensuring *Zero hunger* is inextricably linked to poverty eradication. Agriculture provides livelihoods for the most poor and vulnerable sections

of the population and supports pro-poor economic development. By increasing sustainable agricultural productivity and incomes of small holder women and men, the goal of achieving *Zero Hunger* can contribute to inclusive economic growth.

The economic growth of the country and the changing demographics are transforming patterns of food demand. There is a growing need for the design

and development of more efficient integrated systems of food production, processing, preservation and distribution that will feed the changing tastes of the nation.

As per International Institute of Refrigeration, if developing countries had same level of refrigeration infrastructure as developed, they would save 200 million tonnes of food or around 14 percent of their food supply. In India, the National





Centre for Cold-chain Development (NCCD) estimates that country has only 15 percent of all the temperature-control transportation facility required and less than one percent of pack houses pre-condition agricultural produce for onward transportation. This lack of infrastructure means that just 4 percent of the country's food is moved through cold chains. Cold chains do not just reduce post-harvest losses but also allows farmers to earn more by tapping into well-functioning remunerative markets and by maintaining quality of their produce. Moreover, with growing climate variability and extremes, resilient transportation infrastructure, will allow food to be transported from surplus to climate stressed areas, thus contributing to achieving *Zero Hunger*. However, India's landscape of highly fragmented land holding

makes the problem even more complex. For example, despite being the world's largest producer of banana, India has just a 0.3 percent share of the global trade. This is primarily because of the lack of large scale commercial farms and low consolidation among small holders.

Developing and upgrading rural infrastructure, training farmers on post-harvest practices that minimize losses, integrating small scale enterprises into value chains, organizing small-holder farmers into farmer producer organizations, customized financial services, investment in agricultural research, and last-mile marketing channels are extremely important for solving the problem of *Zero Hunger* and ensuring social equity, gender inclusiveness and reducing the carbon footprint of agriculture.

"When tillage begins, the other

arts follow. The farmers, therefore, are the founders of human civilization." The agriculture sector is a laggard in the fast changing economic landscape of the country. The farmer-the first participant of the economy, has to be supported to achieve the highest production and productivity, and must be ensured a larger share of profit along the value chain. Currently, we have a one-way movement of raw materials and a one-way movement of finished goods. But to achieve *Zero Hunger* that also helps eradicate poverty the flow must be transformed into a two-way movement of commerce and healthy, nutritious food between the farmers and the consumers.

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