



# The Sustainable Food Systems Transition

**Summary of the transition:** Enabling sustainable and healthy diets with a greater emphasis on a diversity of foods, mostly plant-based, and more moderate consumption of meat and fish, as well as dramatic cuts in the waste involved in food supply and consumption. This transition recognizes the potential nutritional benefits from diverse foods and food systems, and the need to reduce demand-driven pressures globally while ensuring food security in all its dimensions.

The global food system is associated with many drivers of biodiversity loss, in particular through land-use change, the impacts of excess nutrients and the generation of greenhouse gases. At the same time, close to 750 million people suffer severe levels of food insecurity and many more are malnourished. Levels of food insecurity and malnourishment, as well as obesity, are projected to continue to increase if current trends are maintained. Shifting to diets that are healthier and more sustainable could simultaneously help to improve human health, reducing diet-related premature mortality by over 90%, and reduce and help reverse the drivers of biodiversity loss.

Healthy diets are underpinned by biodiversity: a diversity of species, varieties and breeds, as well as wild sources (fish, plants, bushmeat, insects and fungi) provide a range of nutrients. Wildlife, from aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, is a critical source of calories, protein and micronutrients such as iron and zinc for more than a billion people.

Currently, some 30% of food produced is not consumed, either because it does not reach the markets and rots (the predominant cause of losses in developing countries), or because it is not eaten and is thrown away (the predominant cause of losses in developed countries). Reducing food losses and waste would bring substantial benefits with few negative trade-offs.

### Key components of the transition:

- Rebalance agricultural policies and incentives.
- Promote the availability, access and consumption of healthy and sustainable diets.
- Promote measures to reduce food waste.
- Encourage businesses to promote sustainability through supply chains and to redesign product portfolios.

