



Healthy diets for all: A key to meeting the SDGs

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Achieving high-quality diets for all is critically important to the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) yet remains invisible in terms of SDG language, targets and indicators.

Healthy diets provide a foundation underpinning successful progress towards targets in health, agriculture, inequality, poverty and sustainable consumption, as well as associated development challenges such as low educational attainment, poor physical growth and low labour productivity.

The importance of healthy, high-quality diets is underlined by four key facts:

- **There is a deepening nutrition crisis.** Malnutrition in all its forms already affects one in three people worldwide – if population growth and climate change increase as predicted, this could rise to one in two.
- **Six of the top nine risk factors to global health are now related to diet.** The risk that poor diets pose to mortality and morbidity is now greater than the risks of air pollution, alcohol, drug and tobacco use combined.
- **The effects of poor diets and nutrition risk locking individuals and countries into long-term disadvantage.** For example, child stunting can have lifelong effects in terms of sub-optimal cognitive development, ill-health, impaired physical growth and reduced earning potential.
- **Malnutrition severely impacts the productivity of many countries and, in the long term, threatens inclusive growth.** Across Africa and Asia, the estimated impact of undernutrition on gross domestic product (GDP) is 11% every year.

Addressing poor quality diets and malnutrition will both release a brake and accelerate progress in achieving many SDGs. Delivering healthy diets will help unlock the development potential of individuals and boost economic productivity and efficiency. It will also reduce demands on expenditure in areas such as health and social protection.

Achieving high-quality diets for all requires concerted action across several sectors. Six priorities for policymakers are:

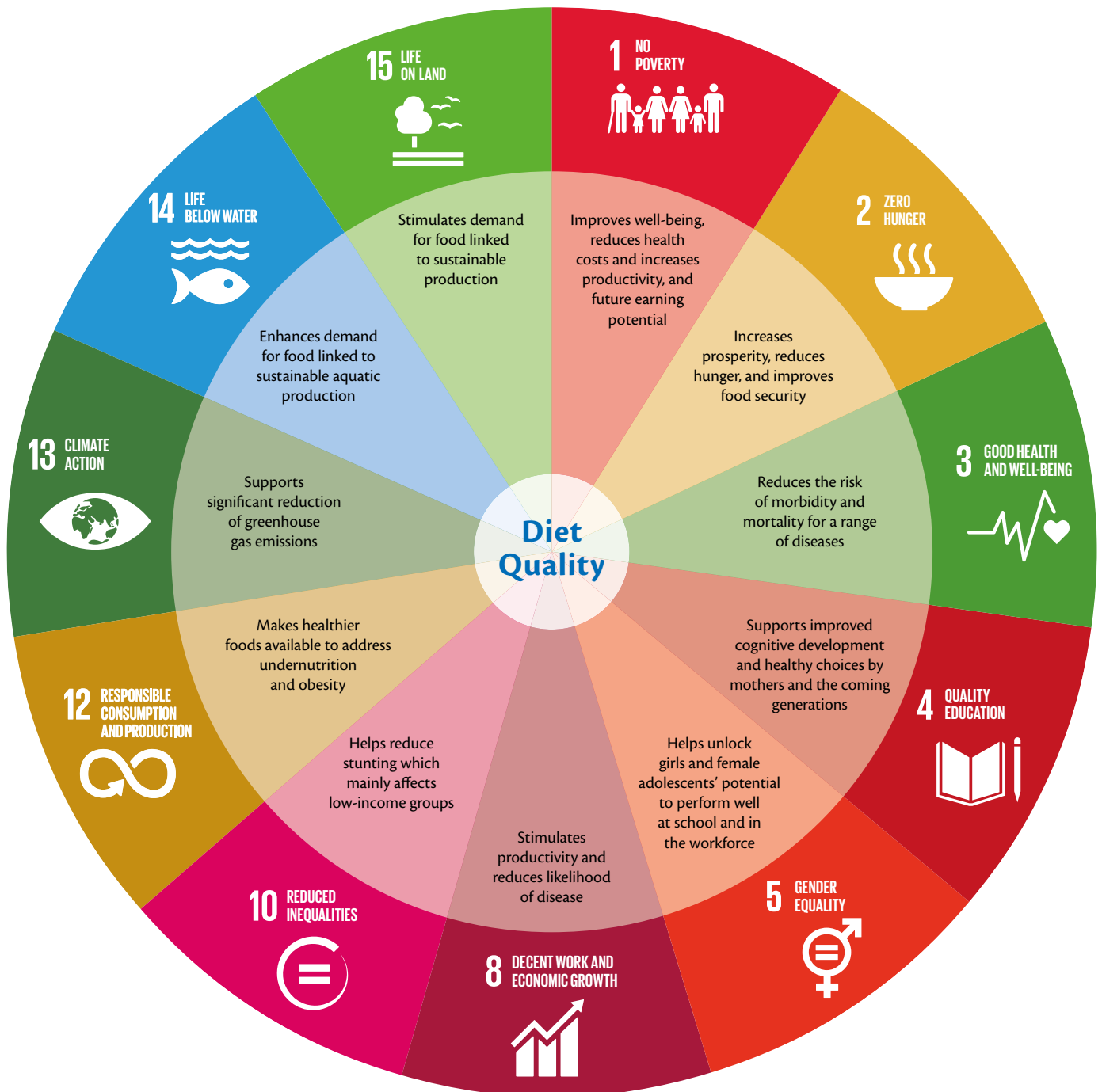
- ① Pay explicit attention to diet quality in developing plans to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.
- ② Adopt a food systems approach to improving diets and meeting the SDGs.
- ③ Focus on improving diet for infants, young children, adolescent girls and women.
- ④ Address barriers and shocks impeding access to healthy diets for vulnerable groups.
- ⑤ Widen national policy approaches to the interpretation of SDG2 to enable policy action to ensure well-functioning food systems.
- ⑥ Step up efforts to collect and report data on diet quality.



**Global Panel
on Agriculture
and Food Systems
for Nutrition**

Meeting the SDGs: Why diet quality matters

The Global Panel's policy brief *Healthy diets for all: A Key to Meeting the SDGs* calls for policymakers at all levels to recognize the central role of high-quality diets and nutrition in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



The Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition supports the Sustainable Development Goals.

Find out more here: Glopan.org/SDG

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