

Global Panel policy brief published on achieving SDG

Lack of healthy diet puts more people at risk of death and diseases

[20 November, 2017] Lack of healthy diet puts more people at risk of death and diseases in developing countries than things like air pollution, smoking and drug abuse. It has been reported that as a result of poor nutrition conditions, there was an estimated 11 percent drop in GDP of countries across Africa and Asia.

This, along with other insights, come from the new report on ‘Healthy Diets for All: A Key to Meeting the SDGs’ that was launched at this year’s Global Panel meeting at a hotel on today in the capital. Zahid Malek, MP, Honorable State Minister from the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, was present at the launching as the chief guest.

Panel members at the meeting included the Director of BRAC, Health, Nutrition and Population Programme, Dr Kaosar Afsana, Global Panel member Emmy Simmons, Global Panel Technical Advisor Professor Patrick Webb, Department for International Development (DFID) country director Jane Edmondson were also spoke at the meeting,

BRAC, and Global Panel in collaboration with International Food Policy Research Institute and Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) hosted this year’s meeting in Dhaka on Monday, 20 November, 2017. The central agenda of the meeting was to engage policymakers at all levels and help them recognise the role of healthy diets in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The report presented six evidence-based recommendations, aimed at policymakers in low and middle-income counties, showing how ‘diet quality’ can be the key to help them unlock and accelerate progress on meeting their Sustainable Development Goals.

These six areas of focus include – paying attention to diet quality in developing SDG plans; adopting food systems approach to meet the SDGs; focusing on improved diet for infants, young children and women; addressing barriers and shocks impeding access to healthy diets; widening national policy approach to



ensure well-functioning food systems; boosting efforts to collect and report data on diet quality.

Zahid Malek MP stated, “this is a country of 160-170 million people. Despite few natural calamities and man-made disasters, Bangladesh has maintained its sustained economic growth. We are turning from lower middle income to middle income by 2021 or earlier. Even then, 45 million people live in absolute poverty, 40 million are suffering food insecurity, 7.3 million children are stunted, only three-fourths of under two children accessed minimal acceptable diet and 70% of our diets are cereal based.”

He emphasized on five points to solve these problems; urge all relevant ministries to act in their own jurisdiction for improved nutrition and healthy diets for all with a multi-sectoral approach, propose a minimal healthy diet affordable to the people, rigorous advocacy and mass campaign for healthy diets, continuous and serious dialogue with commercial markets to make them pro-people, nutrition-sensitive and supportive for healthy population and all stakeholders – government, NGOs, UN and private sectors must work together for community mobilization

The consensus at the meeting was that one critically important policy area that connects many of the SDGs, is the provision healthy diets for all. Invisible in terms of SDG language and not mentioned among the many targets, healthy diets are a foundation underpinning successful progress toward targets in health, agriculture, inequality, poverty and sustainable consumption.

With thanks

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