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THE STATE OF
**FOOD SECURITY
AND NUTRITION
IN THE WORLD**

**BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE
FOR FOOD SECURITY
AND NUTRITION**

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VIET NAM. A girl working in a rice field in Viet Nam, where rice production and food security are threatened by rising sea levels and temperature increases linked to climate extremes.

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Rome, 2018

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FOREWORD

In September 2017, we jointly launched *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*, marking the beginning of a new era in monitoring progress towards achieving a world without hunger and malnutrition, within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This report monitors progress towards the targets of ending both hunger (SDG Target 2.1) and all forms of malnutrition (SDG Target 2.2), and provides an analysis of the underlying causes and drivers of observed trends. While *the prevalence of undernourishment* is at the forefront of monitoring hunger, *the prevalence of severe food insecurity* – based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) – was introduced last year to provide an estimate of the proportion of the population facing serious constraints on their ability to obtain safe, nutritious and sufficient food.

The report also tracks progress on a set of indicators used to monitor World Health Assembly global targets for nutrition and diet-related non-communicable diseases, three of which are also indicators of SDG2 targets.

The challenges we face are indeed significant. Of great concern is the finding last year that, after a prolonged decline, the most recent estimates showed global hunger had increased in 2016. Last year we observed that the failure to reduce world hunger is closely associated with the increase in conflict and violence in several parts of the world, and that efforts to fight hunger must go hand in hand with those to sustain peace. New

evidence in this year's report corroborates the rise in world hunger, thus demanding an even greater call to action. Furthermore, while we must sow the seeds of peace in order to achieve food security, improve nutrition and "leave no one behind", we also need to redouble efforts to build climate resilience for food security and nutrition.

In 2017, the number of undernourished people is estimated to have reached 821 million – around one person out of every nine in the world. Undernourishment and severe food insecurity appear to be increasing in almost all subregions of Africa, as well as in South America, whereas the undernourishment situation is stable in most regions of Asia.

A more encouraging finding last year was that the rising trend in undernourishment had not yet been reflected in rates of child stunting; this continues to be the case this year. Nonetheless, we are concerned that in 2017, nearly 151 million children under five have stunted growth, while the lives of over 50 million children in the world continue to be threatened by wasting. Such children are at a higher risk of mortality and poor health, growth and development. A multisectoral approach is needed to reduce the burden of stunting and wasting, and to appropriately treat wasting to reduce childhood morbidity and mortality.

In addition to contributing to undernutrition, the food insecurity we are witnessing today also

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contributes to overweight and obesity, which partly explains the coexistence of these forms of malnutrition in many countries. In 2017, childhood overweight affected over 38 million children under five years of age, with Africa and Asia representing 25 percent and 46 percent of the global total, respectively. Anaemia in women and obesity in adults are also on the increase at the global level – one in three women of reproductive age is anaemic and more than one in eight adults – or more than 672 million – is obese. The problem of obesity is most significant in North America, but it is worrying that even Africa and Asia, which still show the lowest rates of obesity, are also experiencing an upward trend. Furthermore, overweight and obesity are increasing the risk of non-communicable diseases such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart attacks and some forms of cancer.

people's livelihoods in response to climate variability and extremes.

Building climate resilience will require climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and management to be integrated into short-, medium- and long-term policies, programmes and practices. National and local governments can find guidance in the outcomes and recommendations of existing global policy platforms: climate change (governed by the UNFCCC and the 2015 Paris Agreement); disaster risk reduction (the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction); humanitarian emergency response (the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain); improved nutrition and healthy diets (the Second International Conference on Nutrition [ICN2] and the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016–2025); and development as part of the overarching 2030

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