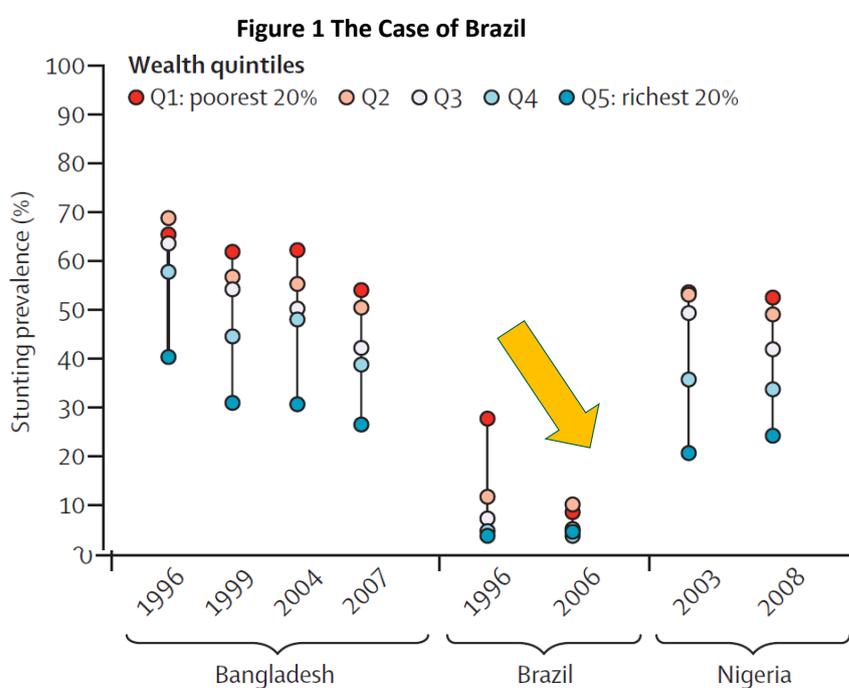


REDUCING INEQUALITIES FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Background and rationale

Sustained disparities between vulnerable and other social groups – reflecting inequalities between and within countries - can slow growth and lead to political instability, migration fluxes and to low levels of investment in the provision of public goods and services, with related adverse consequences on food security and nutrition. Stark inequalities – including between rural and urban areas – in access to basic services and assets lead to unequal processes of economic growth and transformation. These inequalities affect households' prospects for overcoming rural poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition.

The relation between inequality, food security and nutritional outcomes is evident in the data of certain countries. For instance, in Brazil the steep decline in stunting that took place in the 1996 – 2007 period (from 37.1% to 7.1%) was associated with an equally steep reduction in the gaps between poor and wealthy families with children under 5 (figure 1). This was the outcome of a set of policies implemented in that country aimed at curbing what was an historically high level of income inequality.



Fuente: Lancet Series; Black et al. 2013

The same pattern did not materialize in other countries, such as Bangladesh or Nigeria, where the policy framework was less conducive to reduce inequality.

The HLPE Note on Critical and Emerging Issues from 2017 describes the relevance of inequalities for food security and nutrition in very clear and precise terms. It highlights that evidence shows the increasing risks to food security and nutrition can be linked to high level not only of income concentration, but also to an uneven distribution of agricultural assets and access to natural resources and, consequently, to farmer's income. All these elements affect the conditions of food security and nutrition.

Focus and expected results

The proposed thematic workstream will contribute to the CFS Vision and the overall objective to address the root causes of food insecurity with a focus on the people most affected by hunger and malnutrition.

The focus will be on inequalities within agri-food systems. The workstream will provide an analysis, based on an HLPE report, on drivers of socio-economic inequalities between actors within agri-food systems influences food security and nutrition outcomes. Gender inequalities and the need to create opportunities for youth would inform the analysis, so there will be scope for complementarities with other MYPOW workstreams, though the overall focus would obviously differ from these workstreams.

Specifically, the HLPE report will analyse quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to how inequalities in access to assets, and incomes in rural areas and agri-food systems impedes the opportunities for many actors to overcome food insecurity and malnutrition. Relevant data on asset endowments in rural communities will be useful in this respect, along with the findings of the forthcoming SOFI report. Given the focus on agri-food systems and the key role of family farmers within these, organic links and complementarities with the UN Decade of Family Farming will be inevitable. The report will also analyse the drivers of identified inequalities and provide recommendations on entry points to address these.

The report will have to rely on a complex information base. The data required, which has to come from the household level to ensure adequate granularity, can be currently sourced mainly from household budget and expenditure surveys, such as those promoted by the World Bank Living Standard Measurement Study (LSMS) and similar surveys undertaken at the national level. The coverage and quality of this information can be improved, and data must be further harmonized in perspective. Therefore, the report will identify areas requiring further research and data collection, also in view of the opportunities provided by the ongoing joint effort of the World Bank, FAO and IFAD within the 50 x 2030 Initiative. In this framework, FAO and the World Bank are working towards the definition of an integrated farm survey model, which includes key socio-economic aspects such as access to assets and the associated inequality, along with poverty, well-being and food security measures. The 50 x 2030 initiative plans to promote the use of such integrated model in up to 50 countries before year 2030.

Subsequently, the HLPE report be the basis of an inclusive discussion at the CFS, leading towards a policy convergence process towards voluntary guidelines on reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition. These guidelines will contribute to the Vision and overall Objective of the CFS by addressing one of the key root causes of hunger and malnutrition with a focus on the people most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition and by elaborating voluntary guidelines guided by the CFS vision to eliminate hunger and malnutrition and advance the progressive realization of the right to food. Further, they would be of relevance for the 2030 Agenda review process, in particular the High-Level Political Forum, where side events may be organized, and the document could be advanced and disseminated in the context of the various review processes around SDG 2, as well as SDG 1, 5, 8, 10 and 16.

Budget estimate and timeline

- HLPE report to be requested for 2021
- inclusive discussion at CFS 48 (2021)
- TOR for policy convergence process adopted at CFS 49 (2022);
- Voluntary guidelines adopted at CFS 50 (2023).

Cost estimate: US\$ 100,000