

What has to be done to get to Zero Hunger?

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Why in News?

- The Global Report on the Food Crises (GRFC) 2023, prepared by the Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC), released recently estimated that between 691 million and 783 million people in the world suffered from hunger in 2022.

What is Food Security?

- Food security means availability, accessibility and affordability of food to all people at all times.
 - **Availability** of food means food production within the country, food imports and the previous years' stock stored in government granaries.
 - **Accessibility** means food is within reach of every person.
 - **Affordability** implies that an individual has enough money to buy sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet one's dietary needs.

About Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC)

- The GNAFC was founded by the European Union, Food and Agriculture Organization, and World Food Programme in 2016.
- It is an alliance of humanitarian and development actors working together to prevent, prepare for and respond to food crises and support the Sustainable Development Goal to End Hunger (SDG 2).
- The Global Report on Food Crises is the flagship publication of the Global Network and is facilitated by the Food Security Information Network (FSIN).
- The Report is the result of a consensus-based and multi-partner analytical process involving 17 international humanitarian and development partners.

Key Highlights of Global Report on Food Crises 2022

- The Global Report starts with a qualified assertion that hunger is no longer on an alarming path upwards at the global level, but still far above pre-COVID pandemic levels.
- It sets the global contexts preceding and during the year under assessment, particularly paying attention to the increasing phenomenon of urbanisation, and its effects on food security.
- In 2022, an **estimated 2.4 billion people did not have access to adequate food**. This is still 391 million more people than in 2019.
- Some good news is that **stunting**, another key metric, defined as the condition of being too short for one's age, **among children under five years of age has declined steadily**, from 204.2 million in 2000 to 148.1 million in 2022.
- Simultaneously, **child wasting**, caused by insufficient nutrient intake or absorption, declined from 54.1 million in 2000 to 45 million in 2022.
- In terms of children who are overweight or obese, the study indicated a **non-significant increase from 5.3% (33 million) in 2000 to 5.6 % (37 million) in 2022**.

What are the Key Drivers of Food Insecurity?

- The report notes the following reasons as being responsible –
 - Slowing down, thanks to lockdowns, economic downturns, and other pandemic-related disruptions in 2020 that led to job losses and reduced incomes for many people;
 - the Ukraine war;
 - Governmental policies that may not be entirely favourable; and
 - Increasing urbanisation that drives changes through the agri-food systems.
- The report's comparison of food insecurity among rural, peri-urban and urban populations reveals that **global food insecurity is lower in urban areas.**

What are the Solutions Ahead?

- The report helps “identify vulnerable population groups, contributing to evidence to inform decision-making and effective action through the appropriate targeting and design of policies and programmes.”
- As per the report, sound nutrition is fundamental to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and must be central in government policy and supported by civil society and the private sector.
 - Some of its recommendations include supporting healthier food outlets as key for enabling access to healthy diets.
- Policy incentives are necessary to encourage shops to sell greater amounts of fresh and minimally processed foods.
- Another key input is on street foods, which an estimated 2.5 billion people worldwide consume every day, thanks to the convenience and cost factor.
- The report calls for **addressing multiple infrastructure and regulatory gaps to improve nutritional safety and quality of street food.**
- The GRFC also suggests building rural infrastructure, including quality rural and feeder roads to connect remote farms and enterprises to main road networks.
- Other public investments to support linkages between (mainly small) farms and small and medium enterprises could include warehousing, cold storage, dependable electrification, access to digital tools and water supply.

Food Security in India

- Since the advent of the Green Revolution in the early-1970s, India has avoided famine even during adverse weather conditions.
- The availability of food grains (even in adverse weather conditions or otherwise) at the country level has further been ensured with a carefully designed food security system by the government.
- This system has two components: (a) buffer stock, and (b) public distribution system.
- **Buffer Stock:**
 - Buffer Stock is the stock of food grains, namely wheat and rice, procured by the government through the Food Corporation of India (FCI).

- The FCI purchases wheat and rice from the farmers in states where there is surplus production.
- The farmers are paid a pre-announced price for their crops. This price is called **Minimum Support Price (MSP)**.

- **Public Distribution System:**

- The food procured by the FCI is distributed through government regulated ration shops among the poorer section of the society.
- This is called the Public Distribution System (PDS).
- Ration shops are now present in most localities, villages, towns and cities.

Challenges w.r.t. Food Security in India

- With nearly 195 million undernourished people, India shares a quarter of the global hunger burden.
- Nearly 47 million or 4 out of 10 children in India are not meeting their full human potential because of chronic undernutrition or stunting.
- The government has large-scale food security and anti-poverty programmes but there are critical gaps in terms of inclusion and exclusion errors.
- Women and girls are particularly disadvantaged.
- Despite the achievement of national food self-sufficiency, new challenges have emerged:
 - Slowing agriculture growth, climate change, land degradation and shrinking bio-diversity.
 - Large tracts of farmlands in India have become barren due to imbalanced fertiliser use and excessive use of a single fertiliser, urea.

Q1) What is the meaning of sustainable agriculture?

Sustainable agriculture is farming in such a way to protect the environment, aid and expand natural resources and to make the best use of nonrenewable resources.

Q2) What is Zero budget Natural Farming (ZBNF)?

Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) is a type of chemical-free farming where the total cost of growing and harvesting plants comes out to be zero (taking into consideration the costs incurred by the farmers are recovered through inter-cropping).

Source: [Explained | What has to be done to get to Zero Hunger?](#)

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