

PRESS RELEASE

THINK TANKS APPEAL TO G20 AGRICULTURE MINISTERS FOR NEW ACTION
TOWARD ENDING HUNGER AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Research leaders coming together under the T20, a network of Think Tanks from the G20 countries, call for new policies for sustainable water and land use in order to achieve food security for all. In a policy brief prepared for the gathering of G20 Agriculture Ministers during the Green Week in Berlin, January 20-22, 2017, they stress that sustainable agriculture can only be achieved if land, water and energy are considered jointly in policies, not in isolation.

The T20 Task Force underscore global policy commitments to advance food security and sustainable agriculture, but call for vigorous follow-up to these commitments by G20 and others. They highlight four policies areas where coordinated action by policy makers, corporate and civil society actors is urgently required: (i) Focusing land and water resource policies on human wellbeing;(ii) investing in and sharing water, agricultural and food systems innovations; (iii) making wider use of digital opportunities for sustainable agriculture; and (iv) re-designing global governance of food and agriculture. Homi Kharas, Senior Fellow at the USA-based think tank Brookings, calls on G20 governments “to ensure that adequate metrics of land degradation and water stresses are available so that the most pressing problems can be identified and addressed”. The think tank leaders say that what is needed is to step up investment in and sharing of agricultural, water and energy innovations that accelerate efficiency and reach small farmers’ needs and to establish broader science policy partnerships. Ashok Gulati, Professor at the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations stresses that “we need to invest in innovative and cost-effective agricultural technologies and farming practices to ensure that water is used more efficiently in food production.” The Task Force calls for taking advantage of digital opportunities for sustainable agriculture and resource use by establishing information and communication technology (ICT) platforms in public-private partnerships at G20 national levels with transboundary access by non-G20 countries. Shenggen Fan, Director General of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), highlights that “there are huge opportunities for the small-scale farm sector, especially in Africa and Asia, to use ICT technologies to link them to urban markets and to improve sustainability of land and water and resilience of the global food system.” Joachim von Braun, Director at the German Think Tank Center for Development Research (ZEF) emphasises the need to make international organizations fit for purpose, “Ending hunger and sustainable agriculture can only be achieved with associated global governance reforms to become fit for implementation of actions, not just communique formulations.”

Background:

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires much stronger attention to sustainable agriculture. Land and water use are currently not sustainable in many regions of the world, including the G20 countries. There is progress in reducing hunger in the world, which has decreased by almost a third since the beginning of the millennium. But close to 800 million people still face hunger and about a quarter of children are affected by stunting due to malnutrition. This situation is most acute in Sub-

Saharan Africa and South Asia. A productive and sustainable agriculture sector will be key to addressing these challenges and achieving food security for all. An integrated, cross-sectoral strategy requires global action, as land, water and energy are no longer just local or regional issues, but their deterioration and management have critical global dimensions. At the political level, sustainable land and water use form part of the package of instruments required to buttress global security and advance the goals of SDG Agenda 2030. In 2015, G7 leaders committed to lifting 500 million people out of hunger and malnutrition by 2030 as their contribution to SDG 2 (zero hunger). Sustainable agriculture was also highlighted as one of the key sectors of importance for achieving the globally agreed Sustainable Development Goals in the G20 *Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* adopted in 2016. In their Action Plan G20 leaders have stressed the link between sustainable agriculture and healthy land-based ecosystems (SDG 15). In addition, linkages to SDGs 6 (water and sanitation) and 7 (energy) as drivers and consequences of a sustainable agriculture systems need to be considered more.

The Policy brief is available at: T20 Website: <http://t20germany.org/>

Contacts:

Joachim von Braun: jvonbraun@uni-bonn.de, and presse.zef@uni-bonn.de

Homi Kharas: hkharas@brookings.edu

Ashok Gulati: agulati@icrier.res.in

The policy brief was developed by the T20 Task Force on “Ending hunger and sustainable agriculture” which is co-chaired by Joachim von Braun (ZEF, Bonn University, Germany), Ashok Gulati (ICRIER, New Delhi, India), and Homi Kharas (Brookings, Washington DC, USA).

These authors are solely responsible for the content and their views do not necessarily represent the views or recommendations of their related institutions.

Members of the task force are: Li Xiaoyun (China Agricultural University’s College of Humanities and Development, China International Development Research Network (CIDRN), China), Jikun Huang (Center for Chinese Agricultural Policy of Chinese Academy of Sciences, China), Sachin Chaturvedi (Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), India), Martín Piñeiro (Argentina Council for Foreign relations (CARI), Argentina), Catherine Bertini (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, USA), Rebecca Nelson (Cornell University, USA), Shenggen Fan and Rajul Pandya-Lorch (International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), USA), Jean Lebel, Dominique Charron (International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada), Achim Dobermann (Rothamstead Research, UK), Nick Vink (University of Stellenbosch, South Africa), Regina Birner (University of Hohenheim, Germany), Michael Brüntrup, Ines Dombrowsky, Waltina Scheumann (German Development Institute (DIE), Germany), Ruth Delzeit (Kiel Institute for the World Economy (IfW), Germany), Heike Baumüller, Nicolas Gerber, Alisher Mirzabaev, Mekbib Haile (Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn, Germany), Ken Giller (Wageningen University, The Netherlands), Jörg Hacker (German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, Germany), Hermann Lotze-Campen (Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), Germany), Michael Obersteiner (International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), Austria), Matin Qaim (University of Göttingen, Germany).