

### **Achieving a Food Secure and Nutritious Pakistan: Identifying Practical Pathways Forward**

Ranked 106<sup>th</sup> out of 109 countries on International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)'s Global Hunger Index for 2017 (Von Grebmer et al. 2017), food and nutrition security are among the greatest challenges for Pakistan. More than half the children in the country under the age of five are either stunted, wasted or both; at least 18 percent of its women (of reproductive age) are underweight; and the overall prevalence of undernourishment is estimated to be about 18 percent of the entire population as well (GoP 2011; GoP 2017). The high prevalence of under-nutrition, particularly among women and children, gave Pakistan the 26<sup>th</sup> highest under-5 mortality rate in the world. Poverty in Pakistan is as high as 39 percent based on the Multidimensional Poverty Index, which points to a large vulnerable and potentially food insecure population.

About 35 percent of households in Pakistan have very low dietary diversity, with around half of their energy intake coming from cereals alone (GoP 2017). Surprisingly, low dietary diversity prevails even in the wealthiest quintiles, which has severe implications given the positive correlation between the unaffordability of a staple-adjusted nutritious diet and stunting (Ibid.). With regard to dietary intake of protein and micronutrients, reveals that 59 percent of households fall below the average requirement for vitamin A, 40 percent for iron, and 37 percent fall below for zinc (Ibid.).

The Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Pakistan (2017), conducted by IFPRI and Agha Khan University (AKU), under the direction of the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) and the United Nations in Pakistan, identified a set of strategic priority areas for immediate and long-term actions. Laying out possibilities for both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions, the Strategic Review contemplated an evolutionary role for government institutions to adopt a food systems approach for achieving food and nutrition security in the country. Given this background, the panel aims to bring together development practitioners and representatives from public and private sectors to deliberate upon actionable steps for achieving a food secure and nutritious Pakistan.

### **References**

GoP forthcoming 2017, 'Food Security Assessment Report', Islamabad: Ministry of National Food Security and Research, Government of Pakistan.

GoP 2011, 'National Nutrition Survey (NNS)', Islamabad: Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform, Government of Pakistan.

Von Grebmer, K. Bernstein, J. Hossain, N. Brown, T. Prasai, N. Yohannes, Y. et al. 2017, 'Global Hunger Index: The Inequalities of Hunger', Washington, D.C., Bonn, and Dublin: International Food Policy Research Institute, Welthungerhilfe, and Concern Worldwide.

### **Panel Organisers**

Dr Stephen Davies, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Email address: [S.Davies@cgiar.org](mailto:S.Davies@cgiar.org)

Ms Mehreen Iqbal, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan

Email address: [mehreen@sdpi.org](mailto:mehreen@sdpi.org)