

HOW CAN URBAN FOOD SYSTEMS DELIVER HEALTHY DIETS?: LAUNCH OF THE GLOBAL PANEL'S NEW POLICY BRIEF

Panel Moderator: Sandy Thomas
October 18, 2017 - 4:35 p.m.

Introduction

Cynthia Milligan

Dean Emeritus, College of Business Administration, University of Nebraska-Lincoln and
President and CEO of Wood Stieper Capital Group

And if the next panel would please come up – I guess we can call it the Urban Food Systems Panel, but it's the Global Panel. Let me tell you about the Global Panel while they are appearing. These are a group of panelists who really care very deeply about improving nutrition, and they all belong to the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition; and that is an independent group of influential experts and leaders who hold or have held high office and show strong personal commitment to improving diets.

The panel convenes international and regional high-level meetings, and they use their extensive networks to bring together and influence policymakers mainly in low- and middle-income countries across different sectors of the food system with a goal to deliver healthy, high-quality diets to all in those countries. They are funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the United Kingdom Department for International Development. The panel just published a document that's a new brief on urban diets and nutrition, and it describes the challenge of providing healthy diets in urban environments; and that's one thing they want to talk about here.

Everyone on the panel today is a member of the Urban Food Panel, and the moderator is the director of the Panel, Professor Sandy Thomas.

Panel Members

H.E. Akinwumi Adesina President, African Development Bank

Sandy Thomas Director, Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition

Emmy Simmons Co-Chair, Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa/Asia

Tom Arnold Former Director General, Institute of International and European Affairs

Agnes Kalibata President, The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)

Sandy Thomas
Panel Moderator

Well, good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you very much, Cynthia. So on behalf of the Global Panel, I'd like to thank Ambassador Ken Quinn and the organizing committee of the Borlaug Dialogue for inviting the Global Panel to launch its new brief today on urbanization and food systems. And we're really pleased to have four members of the Global Panel here who are going to talk about the brief over the next half an hour. So we have Emmy Simmons, we have Tom Arnold, we have Agnes Kalibata, and also Dr. Akin Adesina. And I'm not going to go through all their bios; they're in the back of the Borlaug Dialogue guide, and they're also on the website, and of course many of them will be known to you.

So we're very honored to participate in this 2017 Dialogue with its rich history and very distinguished long line of Laureates that we've been hearing about today. And we're also really delighted, of course, at the Global Panel. That one of our members, Dr. Akin Adesina has been named this year's World Food Prize Laureate. It's been a privilege and an inspiration to work with you over the last two and a half years. And in particular what I would like to say is that Dr. Adesina has really had some great ideas about leadership and leadership for nutrition across the African Continent. And we'll be hearing more about this new initiative at a reception that were holding this evening. I just wanted to mention that it's being opened up to everybody at 7:30, Cedar Rapids Room. You'll be able to hear more from our Global Panel talking about how importantly leadership is across Africa and indeed across other parts of the world. So do feel free to come along. There will also be copies of the brief there as well and on the resource table outside.

So I'd just like to say a couple of things about the Global Panel itself. I don't think I have a clicker here, so could I have the next slide, please? Here it is, okay, so you should be able to see. So there we have the members of the Global Panel that 11 people across the world... they're all senior people—if you either run or have run large organizations—people who have specialized not just in agriculture but also nutrition and food systems. And what's key about this membership, it enables us to produce a whole range of evidence-based policy recommendations to provide guidance for governments, also other state [inaudible], particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Most of our focus, but not all of it, has been on South Asia and Africa.

So a question that I'd just like to spend a minute on is how we actually do this, and chiefly we do it by producing briefs which review the best available evidence. They're peer reviewed, and they're put in accessible language to help policymakers think about, what are the best kind of interventions that they might make to improve food systems so that they deliver healthy and affordable diets for all. So whether it's food safety, climate change, consumer behavior, the economic [inaudible] of malnutrition, these have been distributed far and wide, and we also do high-level roundtables in country as well, to share these ideas.

And what's particularly important on the top left-hand side is just a reference to our Foresight Report, which we produced last year. And this produces an analysis which takes a forward look out to 2030 to see how food systems are going to face a number of different challenges. One of those is urbanization that we're hearing more about today and that takes those ideas further. But a central tenant of that report based on the evidence that's analyzed is that food systems really need to move from feeding people to nourishing people and to do that by bringing in a

whole range of other parts of externalities as well as different parts of the food system. So that's something we'll be hearing more about.

So what we've done today is brought before you this new brief on urbanization. It drivers some of the ideas in the Foresight Report, and you're going to be hearing more about it from Emmy Simmons, whose going to present that in a moment. And then each of our panel members in turn will provide some comments, and then we'll conclude the end of that. And I think this is the last session of the day or is a gap of half an hour. So if you want to speak to any of us afterwards, be very pleased to do that, as there isn't a Q&A directly.

So, Emmy, would you like to come over and present?

Emmy Simmons

Thank you, Sandy, and thanks to all of you in the audience, many of whom have been here since one o'clock. You have incredible durability. We're moving the theme of the World Food Prize events this afternoon. At this last, in this last session it's been kind of a focus on agriculture and production and supply, to a question of food systems and diet and who eats those diets and why do they eat them and where do they live and how does it go.

Urbanization is a phenomenon which this season is going at a more rapid rate than it has ever done in history. So our last brief, the most recent one that we're introducing today, looks at the challenges of providing healthy diets in growing urban environments, especially but not only in lower- and middle-income countries.

One of the things that we found when we started to do the brief was that we were focusing on issues and problems, and we realized that what we needed to do for policymakers was to start identifying what are the opportunities for change. And it turns out, as you'll hear even though I have a very short time to present, that there are many opportunities for intervening to make diets in urban areas healthier for populations of all income levels.

So as I said, populations are growing more rapidly today than they have ever grown in the past. In 2014, just over half the world's total population lived in towns and cities, and this is expected to rise to two thirds of the total population by 2050. This is the most important point – 90% of those additional 2.5 billion urban residents are going to be living in Asia and Africa. This puts an enormous challenge out there for Asian and African policymakers. I'm going to skip this slide; we don't have much time.

This slide sort of gives you a really visceral idea of what's happening with urban growth in Africa. In 1950 you can see urban populations really down there – 2050, way up. The scale and magnitude of change is obvious. In fact, the projected population in the next 30 years between 2020 and 2050 is likely to be more than double, double that of the previous 70 years. This is an enormously fast rate of growth.

So in the Global Panel brief we focused on urban diets and nutrition and how these respond to the projected demographic changes and the implication that these demographic changes hold for the way that urban food environments will work. The need for more food, the growth of markets to deliver that food, and perhaps most importantly what challenges policymakers will face, not just in ensuring that it's there but it's safe, affordable and nutritious. So we've tried to pull together, as Sandy has said, evidence that is currently available to identify what it will take

in the coming five years, ten years, to increase access to healthy, high-quality diets for future urban populations.

Urban food systems are challenging for two big reasons. One is, they're really complex, and the other is that the population that lives in urban areas is very diverse. Why complex? Complex because urban food systems pull in food not just from the local farm and the local producers but they also tap supplies available from around the world. I was interested in the presentation on Russian production of wheat and the importance that Russia is placing on exporting wheat to cities and towns and nations around the world.

So the urban food environment encompasses many different kinds of market outlets, from street food vendors to international supermarkets. And research shows that urban food environments are transforming themselves pretty much at the rapid pace of demographic change. So while urban and peri-urban agriculture are important for sources of food in some towns and cities, most urban food systems, especially in Africa, are effectively driven by market factors that have roots in the global market.

Urban food environments are also increasingly diverse – different incomes, tastes, lifestyles, housing quality, access to water, access to sanitation, the quality of jobs that are on offer, the educational levels of individuals and families. In spite of this diversity and complexity in the urban food environments, however, it is possible to make some broad generalizations about urban food systems, largely drawing on our Foresight Report and also to look at consumers' interactions with these systems – what it means for the diets they consume and what it means for the nutritional outcomes associated with those diets.

The characteristics of the urban diets in low- and middle-income countries, that pretty much everyone agrees are kind of common across the country, have to do with the fact that in general average urban incomes are higher than average rural incomes; and average urban incomes are increasing more rapidly with economic growth.

What happens then is that these rising incomes result in higher consumption of food, calories, processed foods, animal source foods, fruits and vegetables. Calories – very much the long-term definition of food security, but highly processed food, hum, that's a little bit more complicated, because it implies involvement of value addition, which people have talked about. It involves international trade, it involves packaging, and it involves the addition in many cases of sugar, salt and/or fat. Animal source food, fruits and vegetables are seen as high nutrient, high-quality products in some cases, although processing can affect that.

Urban consumers, therefore, have greater access to a broader variety of fresh foods because of the size of the urban markets, such as legumes, vegetables and fruits. But because of the greater marketization of urban food systems, a lot more processed food is available.

In our Foresight Report, we spend a lot of time talking about how highly processed food or ultra-processed food generally tends to be a bad thing as far as nutrition outcomes. But I do want to point out that, as we looked at this more deeply, we realized also that there are positive nutritional outcomes that can be associated with highly processed food. So it's an issue that takes some consideration. But urban consumers do eat more animal source food and more vegetable food.

But the key conclusion is that urbanization and rising incomes do not automatically lead to better diets and to better nutrition. There's more diversity of foods but also more access to ultra-processed food. Ultra-processed foods of a fast food restaurant, for example, are the kind of food that conveys more sugar, salt and fat to diets and actually is beginning to have an effect in terms of nutritional quality.

The urban poor are not the parts of the urban population who are experiencing rising income as often, and there are substantial differences to be noted between high- and low-income groups. The urban poor frequently lack access to nutritious, safe and affordable foods. So poverty, evidenced by the growth of urban slums across much of the developing world, also contributes to poor diets, poor nutrition and ill health. The lack of income reduces the potential for poor populations to make healthy dietary choices. The lack of time as people work long hours in the informal sector to pursue income opportunities reduces the possibilities of their cooking healthy meals at home. And inadequate housing and kitchen facilities, including the lack of refrigeration, impose further constraint on the dietary choices of poor urban households.

One of the most striking, kind of, generalizations that one can make is that a large section of the urban poor really rely upon the informal sector to purchase their foods – street food vendors, daily markets, people who are selling things door to door. In Sub-Saharan Africa, daily energy intake from street food in adults ranges from 13% to 50%. What are the health concerns? Again, the sugar, fat and salt, and the relationship of the consumption of those particular nutrients with non-communicable diseases, as well as foodborne diseases associated with poor hygiene and poor sanitation in the streets.

I just whipped through so much of the evidence base that you really do have to look at the report to get a better feeling for it. But the conclusion is inescapable: Urban malnutrition is a growing crisis. It's a growing crisis for the better off who have more money and can make choices which are not in support of good health and poor residents who are also constrained from access to healthy food and also constrained in the kind of choices that they make. So many urban environments now are experiencing what is called a "triple burden" of malnutrition. I think, Per, we have to thank you for the phraseology of "triple burden."

Hunger, as indicated by the stunting of children under five and too few calories; micronutrient deficiency – and both of those coexist with overweight, obesity and a rising tide of diet-related non-communicable diseases, heart diseases, diabetes, Type 2 diabetes, and some cancer.

So we are looking today at undernutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa where we find that the number of undernourished children in cities more than doubled between 1985 and 2011 – 155 million children under five suffer from stunting. We're finding also that the rate of anemia, the lack of sufficient dietary iron, was higher in urban than in rural areas – example given there from Malawi. We're also finding that in Africa overweight and obesity among children as well as adults is increasing. And it is increasing in Africa since 1990, but in 2016 we found that in fact almost half of the children who were under five who were overweight lived in Asia, or urban Asia.

So this is an issue. We've always thought about undernutrition as being a rural problem, having too little access to food. We think about urban populations as generally better off, more access to food, more availability of food; but in fact the end result is not in fact as positive as we would like.

So in the brief, which I would recommend that you read for a lot more detail, where we took a bold step, or a set of bold steps, to look at potential priorities for intervention, opportunities for intervention in three areas – governance, research and policy.

In the governance arena, we have identified sort of four levels of governance that bear some responsibility for addressing the triple burden of malnutrition that is rising in so many cities. Cities and municipal governments are perhaps the core area for action. They should be the primary authority for assessing the dietary needs of populations and addressing food security and diet quality. National governments, obviously, have a great role to play in how they manage decentralization, how they spread best practices to enhance diet quality and support it with regular and regulatory actions.

Civil society organizations – and some of you are from Kenya where civil society organizations have played a great role in encouraging actions on behalf of the poor urban populations to increase their access to safe, affordable food. And the business sector, obviously, should view urban markets as an opportunity for higher profits, not only for higher profits but also as a spur to industrial innovation.

Research is an important arena. We've just identified a number of questions, and again I think I'm short on time, so let me just put them up. Processes that affect the quality of diets, to how are consumer preferences changing, lifestyle changing, what kind of foods spell a modern lifestyle. One of the most cost-effective interventions that a government can do – regulation, putting new infrastructure, establishing new opportunities with regard to housing. How do hidden aspects of urban food system affect demand? What role do food industries have in shaping urban food choices? And how can big data on food purchases, prices, locations and costs be better used?

So for those of you who can't read that small printing, I hope that gives you a feeling for the kind of researchable questions that we feel need to be answered, actually, quite quickly.

The Global Panel also has made eight recommendations for policymakers. Rebalancing efforts, policy efforts, to make high-quality diets a priority, not just for rural populations but for urban populations as well. At the local level, urban authorities need to be able to champion better diets and nutrition. Policymakers should capitalize on opportunities for influence offered by urban food systems. Often there is a great deal of criticism of the food industry for advertising sugary, salty, fat foods to young children, for example. But in fact there are opportunities with school feeding, there are opportunities with community education to actually influence those trends in the opposite direction.

We also feel that policymakers need to connect with wider areas of policy that affect the urban food system as a whole – infrastructure with regard to water and sanitation, for example, housing and transport. I was in a meeting in Detroit in the United States some time back in which everyone said – Oh, this is so great. We have a farmers' market. Poor people in urban Detroit have much better access to fresh fruits and vegetables. But the problem was that the closest bus stop was six blocks away, so people didn't actually have that better access.

Four other recommendations addressing the needs of different urban population groups is really important. Policies need to be tailored to the economic and social structures of the cities if we're going to achieve improved consumer access and dietary choice for all. Changing attitudes towards the informal food sector – many countries have tried to eliminate informal food sectors,

streets vendors, corner market stores, in order to “modernize” the city. And yet this has the effect of removing a source of affordable, prepared food for time-pressed urban workers who may not even have any place to cook if they have it themselves.

We talked about giving more attention to the specific challenges associated with rising rates of overweight and obesity, which are particularly marked in urban populations, and to disseminate efforts to tackle urban health and nutrition challenges together.

So there's a lot in the paper, a lot of evidence. There is more evidence coming out of other papers that we reviewed and other processes that I think perhaps some of you have participated in, in a Milan urban agenda, the Habitat 3 and so forth. But this is an area that's emerging, we believe, as an area for new attention and attention which is difficult, because it involves not just farmers, not just AGCO providing tractors; but it involves public health people, community organizations, businesses, governments, local governments, and a whole range of people that I think we in the food community and the food security community are less familiar with.

So with that, let me close and invite you to read the paper itself, *The Brief: Urban Diets and Nutrition Trends, Challenges and Opportunity Policy Action*. Thank you so much.

And it's my great honor to introduce my next panel member, my colleague, fellow panel member, Tom Arnold.

Tom Arnold

Thank you very much, Emmy. I'd like to pick up where she left off by saying that the issues we're dealing with in this brief are issues that are now of their time and increasingly will become so. And I think that can be maybe best illustrated by, if we look back ten years and see how we've changed the words we're using about food and nutrition and what those words actually mean.

Before the food price crisis in 2007 and 2008, we spoke about “food security.” What we really were talking about were agricultural productivity and increasing production. And after the food price crisis, we began to realize that you could have enough food, but you wouldn't necessarily have nutrition security. So we began to talk about food and nutrition security and brought with it some important insights, which got reflected in policy. The insight that the first 1,000 days was of critical importance to a person's development capacity – that in turn got reflected in the initiative of the scaling of the nutrition movement, which has had a big impact, I think, in that now 59 countries and three Indian states have committed to try to improve their own nutritional status.

But now ten years on, we're using words in a different way again. When we now talk about “malnutrition,” we are talking about three elements of malnutrition, as Emmy said – undernutrition, micronutrient deficiency or what we call “hidden hunger,” and obesity. And the balance between these three elements of malnutrition is changing, and it's shifting actually quite decisively towards obesity as being a bigger part of malnutrition. And therefore we have to reflect that in our thinking, in our politics and in our policy.

But there's a very straight, straightforward and powerful proposition that we still have to advance, and it is that malnutrition in its triple form, is of the most fundamental importance to

the development capacity of a country, to the health of a country, vis-à-vis the connection between obesity and non-communicable disease and the problems that that's going to store up in terms of public health and in terms of economics. We know that the economics of undernutrition are appalling. It not only in its acute form leads to child mortality; in its chronic form leads to stunting with that all that requires.

So with that basic proposition that malnutrition is of central political importance, there are three things that need to be done. Firstly, political prioritization, and that's why I think the initiative which Akin was very much behind, the African Leaders' Initiative on Nutrition, is so important and all the various manifestations of political prioritization that need to go towards nutrition.

Secondly, the policy framework. At a separate meeting this morning, Agnes talked about the need for a sound policy framework. I think what we're advancing in this brief is an attempt to outline what is an appropriate policy framework to deal with this triple-headed monster of malnutrition.

And finally the other issue is the capacity issue, which again Agnes spoke about this morning. Dealing with this, attacking this problem of malnutrition is going to require multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach, and that needs capacity to be developed in a way that we haven't begun to do so yet. So that's, if you like, my take to follow on from Emmy's excellent presentation. Thank you.

Agnes Kalibata

I have a feeling you can't see me, so I have to stand. Thank you so much. A lot has been said on malnutrition and urban, what's going to happen really from a perspective of, we need to worry about this. I just want to look at it from a different perspective. I want to look at it from an opportunity perspective, because I care so much about smallholder farmers when I think about the market that gets created because we are urbanizing enough.

In the morning we discussed how, after all this urbanization, if we do it right, we might be even more connected to the rural populations than the urbanization going forward. So I get excited about the market potential that gets created, especially as we heard in the morning, because we were talking about the fact that some countries, Senegal singled out, are beginning to produce competitive, constitute enough to use the type of inputs that are coming from this continent.

So for me that's what I look at when I think about how smallholder farmers... I said "this continent" – I meant "that continent," Africa. Sorry. I forgot for a time we're in a different continent. Yes, so really Africa right then with appropriate urbanization and with ability to compete with inputs that are coming to the continent – and if Akin's vision comes true, and I know it will come true – when we start connecting from country to country, have those value chain appropriately connected, there's no reason why African smallholder farmers can't be productive and can't be businesses, as Akin has always said.

Another reason for hope is associated with what happened last year here on recognizing biofortification. Again, there's enough that is going on right now. I was talking about the zinc rice in the morning, and these kinds of things are very exciting, because you see an opportunity to take it to millions of people out there.

So there's a lot among us. There's a lot that is happening for us to [inaudible] urbanization, for us to [inaudible] malnutrition, for us to do the right thing. So in the world of worries, I'm not worried at all. I think we can do this.

I want to now divert a little bit. I also have the honor as I stand here, of as you saw in line, asking the next person in line to talk. And because of that, I want to say something about Dr. Akin before I ask him to come and speak.

Dr. Akin was at AGRA before. He's done many things, but let me just talk about what I liked about him from the time of being at AGRA. First of all, I was presently surprised by the AGRA model when I got to AGRA, and I actually thought—were you a minister before you came to AGRA? Because just kind of when I looked at him, the problem that AGRA was trying to address like, these people must have been sitting in brains of ministers and understanding the challenges they have. Because they were trying to build institutions from the ground, near the farmers. I had never understood that about AGRA until I went to there, that they actually really trying to build institutions that can allow farmers to access fertilizers where they are, seeds where they are. And the AGRA dealership model that I keep talking about that really reduces the distance from the farm that I told you about in the morning, was driven by Akin himself.

Another thing that I found—I remember that one time Akin came to where I was minister. He was still at AGRA, and it was like he was talking to me about some final solutions that he had found, and I'm like, this man is always talking about things. So I couldn't figure it out, but when I went to AGRA, I actually understood what he was talking about. He was trying to sell me on the risk-sharing facility, that if we got it into the country, would help fund [inaudible] so that smallholder farmers can get a place to sell their produce. That time, I'm sorry, I didn't understand it. I was nodding my head, but I didn't know what you were talking about. But when I got to AGRA, I understood how this actually... I visited, I went to Nigeria when I worked at AGRA, and I was looking at some of the projects that AGRA has funded, and it was like—this is what Akin was talking about, the risk-sharing facility which you introduced in Nigeria when you went there. That actually announced funds of 400 businesses and it came to over \$300 million dollars and is doing a fabulous job.

But then the one that I found most amazing was the African Enterprise Challenge Fund. I was talking to a dear friend recently and they are like, "you're becoming another Akin in AGRA. You just won't go away, because you need money." So he really pushed [inaudible] to start an African Enterprise Challenge Fund, which funds businesses, very good innovative ideas, businesses. Today I'm happy to tell you that actually at the last [inaudible] of the European Union launched a risk-sharing facility with 44 billion, where they want to fund any business that we have. They are saying, give us any viable business you have in seeds from African Enterprise Challenge Fund from fertilizers. We are ready to fund them. So I mean this is like music to anybody who is walking in the African environment. So, Akin, I really think the reason that we're here today... Which is, by the way, the first time I come to Iowa. I've got invitations for the last ten years. I only come this year, because I couldn't stay away.

The last thing I wanted to say—In 2015 [inaudible], I happen to be in a meeting where Akin was, and he talked about the need to do something about nutrition. I'm just trying to bring it home to this conversation. And he said, "Oh, you know what? We need to start an African leaders forum for nutrition. You know, we need to be getting around the African leaders and discussing about the state of malnutrition on this continent." Everybody was talking about it. That summit, the African leadership... What did you call it? The African Leaders for Nutrition

was launched. There are very few people from that continent that said things and get them done as soon as they said them. So I welcome Akin.

Akin Adesina

Thank you very much, my dear sister, Agnes, and thank you for coming after ten years. It's really great, and let me thank all of you for coming to this last session, because it's a very, very important session as the Global Panel launches this report, our policy brief. So let me first thank Sandy Thomas for all the great work that you and all your team have been doing, to thank Emmy for all your great work, and also Arnold and the rest of the panel members.

You know, when I think about what this Global Panel is actually doing, why this is very important, I can best summarize this in one of the things that came out of our report, which says, "Poor diets now pose a bigger risk to mortality and mobility than the risks of alcohol, unsafe sex, drugs, and tobacco use, all combined." And so this is a very, very serious problem that we have. Poor nutrition has become the number one killer in the world. It's therefore high time to address this seriously and to address it decisively.

Let me thank Per Pinstrup Andersen. I think most of us who know Per Pinstrup Andersen, his research work for decades have informed us a lot about many of these issues. And I think, you know, Emmy was talking about the triple burden of malnutrition that we have, that you helped us to think about.

But I also want to thank a lot of the work the World Food Prize Laureates that were recognized last year – you know, they're all here – about the work on biofortification, which is very, very important to make sure that we have the right nutrients in our food.

But I remember when I was at Rockefeller Foundation, there was Derek Yach, who was hired at the time as a director for health. And, Bob, you know, all of my bosses are all there, and I remember in the Rockefeller Foundation board room, Derek Yach got up, and he started talking about something I didn't understand. And he was talking about obesity, and I remember asking him a question. We are talking about how to feed people, and you're talking about how fat people will get thinner. I couldn't understand what he was talking about, but Derek Yach was ahead of his time. He recognized the importance of rising population growth, urbanization, the eating habits, lack of exercise and things like that that actually make obesity a big problem.

Today if you look at obesity, essentially you have, I think it's estimated to cost almost \$42 billion in the next 20 years or so, I mean, \$47 trillion dollars, \$47 trillion dollars in the next 20 years. So this is all very, very important. So with urbanization we aren't eating well, we basically aren't also living well.

And I think one of the things that you find in the report also is the rapid increase in many of the non-communicable diseases, of potential cancers, Type 2 diabetes. In short, the urban foods that we eat are very high in calories and high in energy but very, very low in nutrients. And I think that's a big problem that we have.

As an African, I think about the whole issue of stunting is one that we must deal with, because when you look at the stunting rates in Africa, you have about 54 million kids that are stunted. And I think my way of looking at it is that this is not a social thing at all. It's not a social [inaudible]. It's an economic issue, because Africa will lose about roughly 11% of its GDP, just

like that. And that we must understand that stunted children today will lead to stunted economics tomorrow. And therefore we have to start looking at the whole of stunting from an economic perspective. You know, when kids get nourished well and they grow well and they have good communicative capacity, whether you're urban or rural, it doesn't matter – you really then will have economies in the future wherein the productivity will rise, it will make a lot of money; and then the income of the countries will also rise.

So I think that we must give the whole issue of nutrition a lot of attention, more than we have. And so that's why I have continued to argue that we should change the bait from just looking at nutrition the way we normally look at it, to say, well, let's look at it from infrastructure. The most powerful infrastructure you actually have – it's not road, it's not a rail, it's not a port – it's actually the gray matter infrastructure. And so how do we build that gray matter infrastructure for Africa? I think it's the greatest thing that we must continue to look at.

One of the things that we find also is the rapid increase in the level of slums that we have. I think you were mentioning, Emmy, about the issue of slums. And I remember we have programs that tell you that we want to make slums better. There are no five-star slums, you know. Slums are slums, and I think we should get rid of slums, because the congestion, the lack of access to a good house and water, sanitation, that complicates the nutrition problem that we have in particular in urban areas.

But I also look at what is happening in terms of the consumption of sugar-loaded drinks. It's very high. It is leading to a lot of obesity that we have. And the numbers are quite staggering. In Africa the number of overweight and obese children under five has nearly doubled from 1990 from 5.4 million people to about 10.3 million people. So I know some folks make a lot of money from it, but I think they are costing us quite a bit also in terms of money.

But I also think that one issue that we need to look at a lot is that the urban areas are also at the receiving end of spillover effects of conflicts, which increases vulnerability and malnutrition. And in fact conflicts occur. As they occur, populations get displaced. The refugees in urban areas, they put pressure on urban food supply systems that destroy in fact the whole food systems on which the poor and vulnerable rural areas depend on.

And so I feel that we need to also, as we talk about the governance issue, talk about political governance that ensures that we reduce these kinds of conflicts. If you look at Yemen, if you look at what has happened in Somalia and you look at many of these countries, I think we need to have good political assistance, rule of law, greater equity and accountability in the management of national resources that are very crucial to avoiding these conflicts.

Peace is a precondition for food security. Every region of the world that has achieved the Green Revolution has always done that and grown it on the regions of peace. So we've got to make sure that we actually have peace to be able to do any of the things that we are talking about. There is no doubt then that we must build more resilient cities. More resilient cities must not just be about housing, about water, about sanitation and so on, all of which are important, but also has to be about healthy and nutritious cities.

And so in addition to the elements that the policy areas that have been talked about by Emmy Simmons, I just wanted to draw your attention to about five areas. First for me is we must get these biofortified crops mainstreamed into our food systems completely. And I think at the African Development Bank that we are committed to helping to push that.

The second is, we need stricter food market regulations in urban areas, especially for the informal food markets. I think governments need to prioritize hygiene and food safety training in these informal markets through appropriate [inaudible] programs.

The third area is the importance of peri-urban agriculture and making sure that when we have peri-urban agriculture, folks are actually growing things that, you know, fruits and vegetables and things that are very much important for people to consume in the urban areas.

And I think we also need better policies that would link rural/urban food systems with greater investment in infrastructure, transport, logistic, storage and markets, and assure steady supply of food to cities and secondary towns. And it's mindboggling the amount of food we lose because we just let them go to waste. And so I think that in Africa, if we actually reduce the amount of food losses, we can feed 300 million people, just like that. And so I think investing in those storage and assistance processing to reduce food losses is going to be a key component.

And I think those that have been pushing for tax on sugar drinks, I believe they have a point. I know there's a debate going on in the United States about this, but I think that we have to cut down the amount of sugar that we all consume.

So as I close, I just want to draw our attention to this beautiful report. I think that you will find this report to be extremely useful as you look at urban governance that needs to actually help us as we deal with the issue of food, of malnutrition in urban areas. We all want to live well, and we have a collective responsibility to make sure the millions that live around the world in urban areas, or rural areas, that they live well. And to live well, you have to eat well. You have to have healthy, nutritious food. And I think that's what we all are very, very committed to at the Global Panel, and I hope that you take some time to read this particular report, because it's a brilliant report for policymakers.

So thank you all very much for coming to this event. We appreciate it. Now you can go and eat well. Thank you very much.