

DFID welcomes the HLPE report and the effort to shine a light on the importance of food systems in the nutrition debate. Given that this is the first draft we think that the HLPE have laid a solid foundation to build on. The draft gives a good background on the core malnutrition issues, with a level of detail and data that portrays the reality of this global issue. The conceptual framework is not overly complicated and does a good job of incorporating the various elements of the food systems in to a visual graphic. The technical detail which follows provides the reader with the nuts and bolts required to understand the framework well. However, there are areas of the report which require further work if the authors are to achieve the “solutions orientated” aim the report sets out.

The report should consider if focusing their main objective towards consumers is the right approach for a food systems report, bearing in mind that small holder farmers are both producers and consumers. Whilst the report provides a number of clear case studies, it is difficult for the reader to pull out “what works and what doesn’t”, in the policy space. Generally, the structure is a little top heavy on the background information and drivers of food systems covered in chapters 1, 2 and 3. Chapter 4 is a relatively short chapter in comparison to the rest of the report and is arguably the focal chapter as it contains efficient policy case studies and the future outlook, providing suggestions on research and partnerships etc. The report is also missing a few key elements around recommendations or calls to action. If the HLPE report is designed to be “solutions orientated” can we incorporate the tools within the Global Panel's Foresight report? These were designed for the purpose of making food systems nutrition friendly and would help to support policymakers to make key decisions.

The conceptual framework does a good job of incorporating all the elements of the food system within a one page graphic. The FAO definition on nutrition security is about access and affordability so it is important to have this as a central part of “the food environment”. Whether other areas within the food system are neglected because “the food environment” takes centre stage is debatable. Perhaps it would be possible to have individual conceptual frameworks or pathways for specific topics. For example, pathways of influence to trade and nutrition, which could provide policy makers with a visual representation of where the gaps are or where there is potential for policy coherence.

A final comment on private sector – given that the private sector are such a centre piece to the food system / nutrition debate, the report could set out a clearer approach on how to engage the private sector more effectively, what incentives are needed, where the conflicts lie etc.

Thanks,

Pete