**Policy recommendation**s for round #2: 13.30-14.30: *Dutch contributions to food security worldwide*

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**member of the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems** [**IPES-Food**](https://ipes-food.org/) **and** [**FIAN International**](https://fian.org/en/)**[[1]](#footnote-1) to**

**the Dutch Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Trade and Development Aid for**

**its Round Table meeting on February 5, 2025**

*What is the worldwide state of food security?*

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/5366f75c-159d-4701-ad19-b3e1e91519e7/content)), between 713 and 757 million people may have faced hunger in 2023. Around 28.9% of the global population – 2.33 billion people – were moderately or severely food insecure. Food insecurity disproportionately affects women and people in rural areas. By 2050, an estimated 70% of the global population will live in cities, highlighting the need to address urban food security and develop fair rural-urban linkages.

Food insecurity is not a problem of insufficient production. The world already produces more than [enough food to feed everyone](https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/charts-of-note/chart-detail?chartId=107818). Yet food is unfairly allocated due to poverty, inequality, discrimination, economic shocks, conflicts and escalating ecological and climate crises. The focus on fossil fuel-based inputs for intensified agriculture and livestock production increases vulnerability to external shocks and fuels climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation.

Although small scale food producers feed the majority of the world´s population, unfair trade and market rules and a lack of public support for family farming and agroecology – as well as lack of access to natural resources – continue to pose structural barriers for food security worldwide.

*What part can the Netherlands play in increasing food security worldwide?*

**Continue support international cooperation in UN agencies and the multilateral system**

Dutch global food security policies contribute to global stability and are committed to achieving the Zero Hunger goal (SDG2). The Netherlands has been a strong supporter of global food governance through various commitments:

* It is an active and committed member of the UN Committee for World Food Security (CFS), the foremost inclusive and multi-actor platform for global food governance. The Netherlands should reaffirm and strengthen its support to the CFS.
* While securing equal and balanced participation of all stakeholder groups, the Netherlands should not trade accountable multilateralism in UN fora for multistakeholderism, which is prone to corporate capture and other power imbalances.
* The Netherlands should continue to support research on agriculture and sustainable food systems through the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.
* The Netherlands should continue supporting smallholder farmers through [IFAD](https://www.ifad.org/en/).

**Maintain the commitment to ODA for agriculture and food security, take a food system approach and contribute towards a just transition to sustainable agri-food systems**

Dutch Official Development Assistance (ODA) has long prioritized food security, with an average annual budget of 350 million euros in recent years. It has proven to be a reliable and committed partner to Dutch and international grassroots civil society, academia and the private sector, funding a broad range of projects promoting the ‘Dutch diamond approach’. The recent announcement to drastically cut the budget for civil society organizations engaged in promoting food systems transformation would severely impair the Netherlands’ positive role in this field.

Dutch agriculture-relevant ODA interventions over the period 2012-2021 [focused mainly on incremental changes](https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/Files/rapporten/2022/Discussion%20paper%20DEF.pdf). Only 9% of interventions furthered a truly *transformational* or systems approach, applying a wide range of agroecological elements, focusing on redesigning the whole agroecosystem based on ecological processes and inclusive and accountable (food) governance structures. These transformational approaches in Dutch ODA should be scaled up.

**Seek better synergies across domestic food production, trade and aid policies**

Supporting [local and territorial markets](https://ipes-food.org/report/food-from-somewhere/) is critical to building food systems that are more resilient to economic and supply chain disruptions. These markets [provide livelihoods](https://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-hlpe/publications/hlpe-19) and help ensure that diverse, nutritious foods reach those who need them, even during supply chain shocks, contributing to local economic development and stability.

ODA interventions to strengthen local food security are often undermined by international trade and investment policies, which dump excess food production in low and middle-income countries’ markets.

In a time of shifting global power structures, and ongoing economic development and emancipation of low and middle-income countries, trade reform is long overdue. Kenya has long called for fairer trade agreements and has joined South Africa, Tanzania, and Burkina Faso in terminating a bilateral investment treaty with the Netherlands. Nigerian dairy farmers cannot compete with cheap imports of over-subsidized European powdered milk. Likewise, Ghana’s poultry sector cannot flourish without halting imports of cheap Dutch frozen chicken cuts.

The Dutch government together with EU institutions should start supporting low and middle-income countries to effectively regulate their markets for ensuring the right to food of their population and to strengthen their domestic food markets. To rebalance agriculture, biodiversity, climate and other land use goals, the Dutch domestic food production system should be oriented more towards supplying a European domestic market, avoiding overproduction and dumping of excess production on developing countries markets.

We appreciate continued efforts of the Dutch government to support countries, small-scale food producers and other constituencies in the Global South to increase their food producing capacities in a sustainable manner, and support in further resilience building, especially of marginalized groups.

1. I would like to acknowledge the support of the members of the Food4All Coalition (Both ENDS, Cordaid, Max Foundation, Oxfam Novib, SNV, The Hunger Project, Woord en Daad, WWF, World Vision) in drafting this paper. The messages and policy recommendations of this document are endorsed by the Food4All Coalition. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)