

# Global Panel defines food systems change

By Rootooba Reporter

The Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition last month launched its new report, *Future Food Systems: For people, our planet, and prosperity*.

The report, produced by an independent international team of leading experts, makes concrete recommendations on the practical next steps which need to be taken to begin a process of food systems transition to protect human and planetary health.

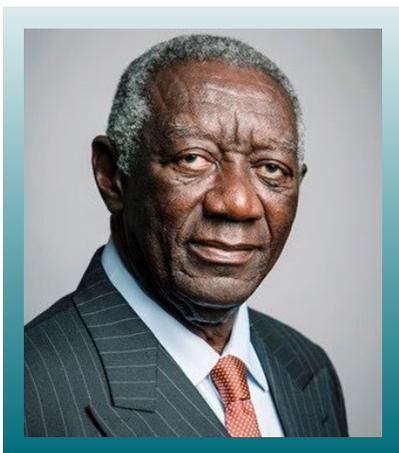
It calls for urgent action, by leaders and decision-makers across the world, to transform food systems so that they deliver sustainable, healthy diets to all.

The product of two years' work, this report distils the latest scientific and policy expertise on transforming food systems.

It spells out who needs to do what in governments, the private sector, development partners, civil society, and citizens, so everyone has access to available and affordable healthy diets, that are desirable and delivered sustainably, within planetary boundaries.

The report is aimed primarily at decision-makers in low- and middle-income countries, but they alone cannot turn global challenges around. In a highly interconnected world, high-income countries also need to act without delay, particularly where their own decisions have worldwide impacts.

Kufuor emphasised how "our food systems are fragile, are damaging our environment, and causing malnutrition, ill health, and premature death."



**Global Panel Co-Chair and former President of Ghana John Kufuor**

In commending this report to governments worldwide, he added: "The situation looks bleak, but the Global Panel believes that the situation can be reversed with renewed political will, sustained commitment, and leadership."

An estimated 3 billion people today cannot afford healthy diets. More than 200 million children under five face a life with insufficient food.

Sub-optimal diets are also creating escalating pressure on healthcare systems. At least 11 million people die every year from diet-related illnesses, including stroke, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes.

Food systems are also a key contributor to environmental damage. At the same time, they are threatened by the environmental damage to which they themselves are contributing.

The agricultural innovation that has made incredible advancements in food production now needs to re-articulate the 20th-century vision of

feeding the population into one that nourishes people.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also exposed systemic weaknesses and fragility in food systems, which were already increasingly threatened by climate change and worsening environmental degradation.

The report, funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), sets out how to turn the situation around, to promote and protect human and planetary health, jobs and prosperity as well as preventing intergenerational cycles of poverty and inequality.

FCDO Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Wendy Morton welcomed the report, saying: "Poor quality diets are a key driver behind all forms of malnutrition and the biggest contributor to the global disease burden".

While it recognises the cost of ensuring that every individual is able to eat a healthy diet every day will be significant, the report shows that the costs of not acting will be immeasurably higher.

More importantly, it describes the benefits to decisive action in terms of millions of new jobs, a reduced economic burden of ill health and reduced costs to health systems, and substantial gains from avoiding global damage from climate change.