



PRESS STATEMENT

By Shenggen Fan
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Walk the Talk: It's Time for the Global Community to Move from Aspirations to Action to Fight Hunger

In 2012, world food security remained vulnerable. Progress in the fight against hunger and malnutrition has been piecemeal, at best, and levels remain unacceptably high, with 870 million people hungry and 2 billion suffering from micronutrient deficiencies. New data from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and results from IFPRI's own scenario modeling, suggest that on its current trajectory of tepid promises and unfulfilled commitments, the international community will fall far short of the Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015.

Despite notable increases in investment in agriculture, food security, and nutrition, the international community—development agencies, financial institutions, governments, and others—continues to miss major opportunities to take decisive action. With agriculture and food security now at the forefront of the global policy agenda, we have an unprecedented opportunity to *walk the talk* with concrete steps:

- We have talked about improving smallholder farmers' agricultural productivity for achieving food and nutrition security, but investment in agriculture, particularly agricultural research, remains low in many developing countries in Africa south of Sahara and South Asia. Investments by governments, the private sector, and farmers must increase and priorities must be carefully selected.
- We have talked about the green economy and sustainable development, especially at last year's Rio+20, but the talk has not translated into specific commitments. We need to develop and implement an action plan to improve smallholders' livelihoods while maintaining environmental sustainability—and turn farming into a modern, forward-looking occupation that offers a future for young, rural people.
- We have talked about gender equality and the positive impact this can have on improving agricultural productivity, but policies, strategies, and development projects should be designed with a greater focus on gender.
- We have talked about reforming agricultural policies in OECD countries to mitigate the negative impact on smallholder farmers in developing countries, but policymakers continue to distort markets with subsidies, trade restrictions, and other policies that have far-reaching repercussions.

IFPRI's *2012 Global Food Policy Report* reviews food policy developments and trends with chapter-by-chapter discussions of major food policy developments, high-quality research, and perspectives of farmers from around the world. It also charts the path forward with a call to action on gender rights, employment in agriculture for youth in Africa, a needed evolution of US and EU support for their farmers, and regional policy reforms to promote food and nutrition security.

The question now is: Will 2013 prove different? It must. In a landscape of rhetoric and promises, on-the-ground implementation must improve if the lives of the hungry and malnourished are to improve. It is time to walk the talk.

Shenggen Fan is the director general of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

For additional materials including the full report and graphics (high resolution and low resolution), please visit: <http://www.ifpri.org/pressroom/briefing/walk-talk-taking-action-fight-hunger>.

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The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) seeks sustainable solutions for ending hunger and poverty. IFPRI was established in 1975 to identify and analyze alternative national and international strategies and policies for meeting the food needs of the developing world, with particular emphasis on low-income countries and on the poorer groups in those countries. It is a member of the CGIAR Consortium. www.ifpri.org