



2 ZERO HUNGER



MODERATORS

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The 17 Rooms initiative is convened by the Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation to stimulate near-term cooperative actions to advance the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This document summarizes insights and actions that emerged from the working group discussions in Room 2 during the 17 Rooms 2020 flagship process. The text was independently prepared by the Room's Moderators and participants, in response to the common question asked of all Rooms in 2020: "In light of recent crises linked to COVID-19, systemic racism, and other urgent challenges, what are 1 to 3 actionable priorities over the coming 12-18 months that address near term needs while also making a decisive contribution to protecting or advancing your Goal's 2030 results? What actions can members of your Room take to advance these priorities?" Corresponding documents prepared by all the other Rooms are available [here](#), alongside a synthesis report prepared by the 17 Rooms secretariat.

The problem

The World Food Programme has warned that COVID-19 could [double the people who suffer from acute hunger](#) by the end of 2020 and presents a major challenge to the realization of each SDG. COVID-19 has, in particular, laid bare myriad challenges affecting our food systems - its inequity, the fragility of its supply chains, its lack of resilience to shocks (public health, economic, climatic, environmental, or pandemic-related), and the toll it elicits on the planet. If the piece of meat that [likely](#) sparked the pandemic were priced to account for its cataclysmic economic and health impacts, that would surely be the world's most expensive meal. COVID-19, with all of its impacts, may just be the first among a new wave of profoundly negative effects linked to the Anthropocene.

The opportunity

2021 is an urgent landmark year for actors who care about food systems given the watershed UN Food System Summit. Yet, it is not a given that the global platform it presents will be used to reconcile the competing needs and interests that must be aligned if food, agriculture, and health practices are to promote biodiversity, crop diversity, regenerate the environment, mitigate climate change, reset the water cycle, promote sustainable consumption patterns which enhance human health and universal food and nutrition security, as well as restore human dignity, equity, and cultural connection.

Room 2 agrees that to bend the curve of diet-related disease and hunger and food and nutrition security, we need to 1) recognize the role of and restore the livelihoods of small scale farmers - especially women - in a dignified way as a positive force for healthy diets and a sustainable planet, 2) advance the adoption of regenerative and ecological farming practices and secure sustainable food systems, and 3) utilize the power and potential of True Cost Accounting (TCA).

Priorities

Over the next 12 -18 months to this end, this group - together with other interested parties – aspires to formulate new narratives, elucidating case studies, and establishing clear targets taking into consideration of all relevant actors including farmers, governments, multi-laterals, private sector, civil society, and others:

1. Contribute to a new public narrative that influences decision-makers to reassign resources (such as government subsidies and taxation policies) toward advancing nutrient-rich diets that are underpinned by diversified agriculture and adapted to local microclimates and sociocultural contexts. Recognizing that the dominant political and corporate interests shaping the global narrative on food do not advocate for these approaches, a new, compelling, fresh narrative is a critical component in the fight to reframe the global food and agriculture discourse including communicating to non-traditional influencers.
2. Collect, share, and promote case studies that demonstrate how True Cost Accounting (TCA) can be applied at the corporate and national levels, recognizing it is unlikely we will shift the method of food/agriculture production toward regenerative and ecological approaches without the evidence needed to make a compelling economic policy argument, which TCA affords. These case studies could include an overview of a new type of food financing institution - a World Bank for Food - that enables the financing of TCA and supports countries' shifts to agro-ecological and regenerative approaches. Ultimately, if we don't endogenize externalities we don't pay for/contend with them sufficiently. If we do endogenize them, we empower farmers and businesses that adopt sustainable practices and incentivize others to follow suit.
3. Establish ambitious and meaningful targets for the adoption of regenerative and ecological agricultural practices globally. Targets might take the form of a percentage of cultivated land for which the prevailing practice is either regenerative or agro-ecological (see [European example](#)). These could be strategically aligned with targets being developed under other processes, such as the biodiversity targets and post-2020 agenda under the [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#). Additionally, a target for a number of companies and countries that apply TCA under an appropriate oversight board could also be established (example: x # countries apply TCA by xxxx year; y # companies apply TCA by yyyy year) related to the SDGs and inclusive of a plan for collaborative advocacy and communications of TCA.