

A heightened focus on food security and sustainability

December 11 2019



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The number of malnourished people is increasing worldwide. More than two billion people suffer from a lack of micronutrients. Infant mortality rates are unacceptably high. Against this background, there is a need for

the global pooling of research efforts, more research funding and an international body for food security and agriculture that prepares policy decisions. This is what Prof. Joachim von Braun from the University of Bonn, Dr. Robin Fears from the European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC) and Prof. Volker ter Meulen, President of the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) call for in the journal *Science Advances*.

The researchers argue that lack of healthy food and poorly managed [agricultural systems](#) on the one hand, and [excessive consumption](#) and [food waste](#) on the other, damage the planet and pose "an unprecedented threat to global food security." World leaders have started to recognize the challenges.

Academies of science, medicine and technology have recently joined forces to form the global network InterAcademy Partnership (IAP). An IAP project is working towards connecting the interfaces of food, food security and global environmental health. The organization brings together networks of experts from Africa, Asia, America and Europe to analyze food systems with a view to global environmental change.

Investment in research infrastructure

The authors highlight the urgent need for investment in research infrastructure to provide reliable data on population health, nutrition, [agricultural practices](#), climate change, ecosystems, sustainability and human behavior. Political decision-makers must increase funding for agricultural and nutrition research.

Although a large body of scientific knowledge on nutrition and hunger is already available, increased international cooperation is required to close knowledge gaps. This also involves social science issues, for example how to transform the behavior of consumers and farmers and how to

introduce previously neglected agricultural crops. The implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) also requires the coherent consideration of research results.

The authors propose an international [food security](#) and agriculture body focused on preparing policy decisions. "Such a body would have the support of the large scientific community associated with it and could address the most pressing nutritional and agricultural issues," write the researchers. The tasks range from the question of how to balance nutritional and environmental goals to the analysis of how to motivate consumers to eat healthily and sustainably.

More information: "Global Food and Nutrition Security Needs More and New Science" *Science Advances* (2019). DOI: [10.1126/sciadv.aba2946](https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aba2946) , advances.sciencemag.org/content/5/12/eaba2946

Provided by University of Bonn

Citation: A heightened focus on food security and sustainability (2019, December 11) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-12-heightened-focus-food-sustainability.html>

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