**African launch of the Global Panel Foresight Report** *Food systems and diets: Facing the challenges of the 21st Century*

African Day for Food and Nutrition Security  
27 October 2016  
Accra, Ghana

**EVENT REPORT**

**Overview**

On the 27 October 2016, as an official side event for the Commemoration of the 7th Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security “Investing in Food Systems for Improving Child Nutrition: Key to Africa’s Renaissance,” the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition (Global Panel) and the John A Kufuor Foundation (JAKF) organised the African Launch of the Global Panel Foresight Report *Food systems and diets: Facing the challenges of the 21st Century*. The event was chaired by Professor Agyeman Badu Akosa, Ghana Focal Point, Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) and Rev. Dr Joyce Aryee, Former Minister of Information, Education, and Democracy in Ghana, gave opening remarks. Professor Baffour Agyeman also spoke on behalf of H.E. John Kufuor, Former President of Ghana and Co-Chair of the Global Panel, who was called away on state matters at the last moment.

**Professor Sandy Thomas**, Director of the Global Panel, presented key findings from the Report, highlighting messages particularly relevant to countries across Africa. Using modelling and trend analysis to generate a new understanding of diets and food systems, and how they could change by 2030, the Report shows that the risk poor diets pose to mortality and morbidity is now greater than the combined risks of unsafe sex, alcohol, drug and tobacco use, with an economic impact estimated to be as high as US $25 billion per year across the African continent.

For this event, the Global Panel also created and distributed the paper *Better diets for a better future in Africa*, which pulls together Africa-specific data from the Report as a resource for actors working towards improving diets and nutrition outcomes. Although great progress is being made in Ghana and across Africa, the Report estimates that, if current trends continue there will still be 216 million undernourished people in sub-Saharan Africa by 2030, with an obesity rate expected to reach 17.5%, double that of 2005. As such, the Report provides evidence-based guidelines for governments and decision-makers to change course through action and investment to create food systems that promote health and deliver quality diets.

Following Prof Thomas’ presentation, she and Prof Akosa were joined by **Mr Bukar Tijani**, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa, Food and Agriculture

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Organization of the United Nations and Professor Matilda Steiner-Asiedu, Associate Professor, Department of Nutrition and Food Science, University of Ghana, to form a panel to allow the audience to ask questions and engage in dialogue on the challenges and opportunities for achieving healthy diets. Questions arose around ideas of quality vs quantity of food produced; labelling; GMOs; increased nutrition education and advocacy for children, adolescents and adults in rural and urban areas; the importance of maternal health and pre-pregnancy health of the mother; and the role of nutrition as preventative medicine.

Impact

There were over 80 people in attendance, including representatives from Institute of Development Studies (IDS), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Cost of Hunger, SNV, ONE, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Potato Centre, Ghana Ministry of Food & Agriculture, and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Nigeria, evidence that there is a real appetite and growing momentum in African countries among public figures, government representatives, donor agencies and advocates to address issues of nutrition and healthy diets. Nearly 200 copies of Foresight report were distributed at the meeting, with requests from attendees for additional copies.

Furthermore, the Report was downloaded 44 times, the Africa paper 23 times, Foresight webpage viewed 225 and 1,286 glopan.org unique page views in the days surrounding ADFNS. These figures suggest that the Global Panel’s participation in the ADFNS side event enabled the Foresight Report to reach additional audiences and generate increased attention to its findings, including interest from media and press who were in attendance. In that same time period, the Global Panel Twitter account recorded the following statistics: 24,900 impressions*, 137 Retweets and 141 Likes.

In advance of the Report launch at ADFNS, Prof Thomas and Prof Akosa, appeared live on TV3 Ghana national television for a 20-minute conversation on food security, nutrition and future diets, to discuss the Foresight report and the African Leaders for Nutrition initiative. Immediately following the event, the Global Panel and JAKF hosted a press conference with nearly 40 journalists. The event and the Report have received notable coverage among African media outlets, including:

- Ghana makes significant gains against hunger, poverty—Report (Joy Online)
- Nutrition Insecurity Impedes Food Security in Africa (IDN)
- Poor nutrition more hazardous than unsafe sex, alcoholism, drug abuse (Vanguard)
- We must act now to change future of diets by Panel Members Kufuor and Kalibata (Daily Nation)
- Africa: Seizing the Moment for a Well-Nourished Future (All Africa)
- Video interview broadcasted on U TV 28 October

The Global Panel and JAKF are grateful to the organisers, participants and all the support staff who made participating in this important ADFNS possible. We hope the Foresight report and the work of the Global Panel provides concrete, useful advice to policymakers and actors engaged in issues of agriculture, nutrition, and food systems.

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* Impressions = number of times a user is served one of our tweets in their timeline or through search results.

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Attachments

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