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## Achieving Zero Hunger by 2030: UN Report

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### Why in News

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According to a study titled **State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World**, hunger and malnutrition is increasing around the world. In this scenario, achieving the **Sustainable Development Goal (2) of 'Zero Hunger' by 2030** will be very difficult.

- The **State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World** is the most authoritative global study tracking progress towards **ending hunger and malnutrition**.
- It is produced jointly by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** of the United Nations, the **International Fund for Agriculture (IFAD)**, the **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**, the **UN World Food Programme (WFP)** and the **World Health Organization (WHO)**.

### Key Points

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- **Increasing Hunger:**
  - **Steep Rise:** The study estimates that almost 690 million people went hungry in 2019 – up by 10 million from 2018, and by nearly 60 million in five years
    - Hunger is an uncomfortable or painful physical sensation caused by insufficient consumption of dietary energy.
    - For decades, FAO has used the **prevalence of undernourishment** indicator to estimate the extent of hunger in the world, thus “hunger” may also be referred to as **undernourishment**.
  - **Chronic Hunger:** There has been **no change in the hunger trend since 2000**, After steadily diminishing for decades, chronic hunger slowly began to rise in 2014 and continues to do so.
  - **Regional Hotspots: Asia remains home to the greatest number of hunger** (381 million). **Africa is second** (250 million), followed by **Latin America** and the **Caribbean (combined 48 million)**.
  - **Rate of Hunger:** The rate of undernourishment (hunger) **in Africa is double compared to Asia** and it is expected that by 2030, Africa will be home to more than half of the world’s chronically hungry.
  - **Impact of Covid-19:** The **Covid-19 pandemic** could also push over 130 million more people into chronic hunger by the end of 2020.
  - **Reasons: High costs and low affordability** was the main reason behind the hunger.
- **Increasing Malnutrition:**
  - **Affordability:** The study estimates that 3 billion people or more cannot afford a healthy diet.
    - In sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia, this is the case for 57% of the population.
    - The key reason behind malnutrition is the high cost of nutritious foods and the low affordability of healthy diets for vast numbers of families.
      - According to the study, a healthy diet costs far more than **USD 1.90/day**, which is the **international poverty threshold**.
      - It puts the price of even the least expensive healthy diet at five times the price of filling stomachs with starch only.
  - **Impact on Children:** According to the study, in 2019, nearly a third of children under five (191 million) were **stunted (too short) or wasted (too thin)**. Another 38 million under-fives were overweight.

## Suggestions

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- **Shifting of Diet: global switch to healthy diets would help check the backslide into hunger** while delivering enormous savings.
  - Shift to a healthy diet will reduce the health costs associated with unhealthy diets.
  - The diet related social cost of greenhouse gas emissions, estimated at USD 1.7 trillion, could also be cut by up to three-quarters by 2030.
- **Transform Food Systems: The transformation of food systems will not only reduce the cost of nutritious foods but also increase the affordability of healthy diets.**
- The study calls on governments:
  - To **mainstream nutrition in their approaches to agriculture.**
  - Work to **cut cost-escalating factors in the production, storage, transport, distribution and marketing of food** – including **by reducing inefficiencies and food loss and waste.**
  - **Support local small-scale producers** to grow and sell more nutritious foods and secure their access to markets.
  - **Prioritize children’s nutrition** as the category in greatest need.
  - Foster **behaviour change** through education and communication;
  - Embed **nutrition in national social protection systems** and investment strategies.

## Way Forward

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This study is the reminder that such a huge percentage of humanity is still going hungry and should be a wake up call for the government in particular and society in general. Innovative strategies such as shifting towards **Smart Food** is the need of the hour, which is highly nutritious and will certainly help to reduce hunger.

**Source: WHO**