

# Food Systems Transformation Imperatives for Healthier Diets and Improved Nutrition



For A Plenary Session on **Healthier Diets from Sustainable Food Systems**  
at the NSN Conference  
Abuja

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 **Praisegate**  
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*Together, Faster, and Farther...*



# Conversations on Food Systems and Healthy Diets Are Gradually taking the Center Stage



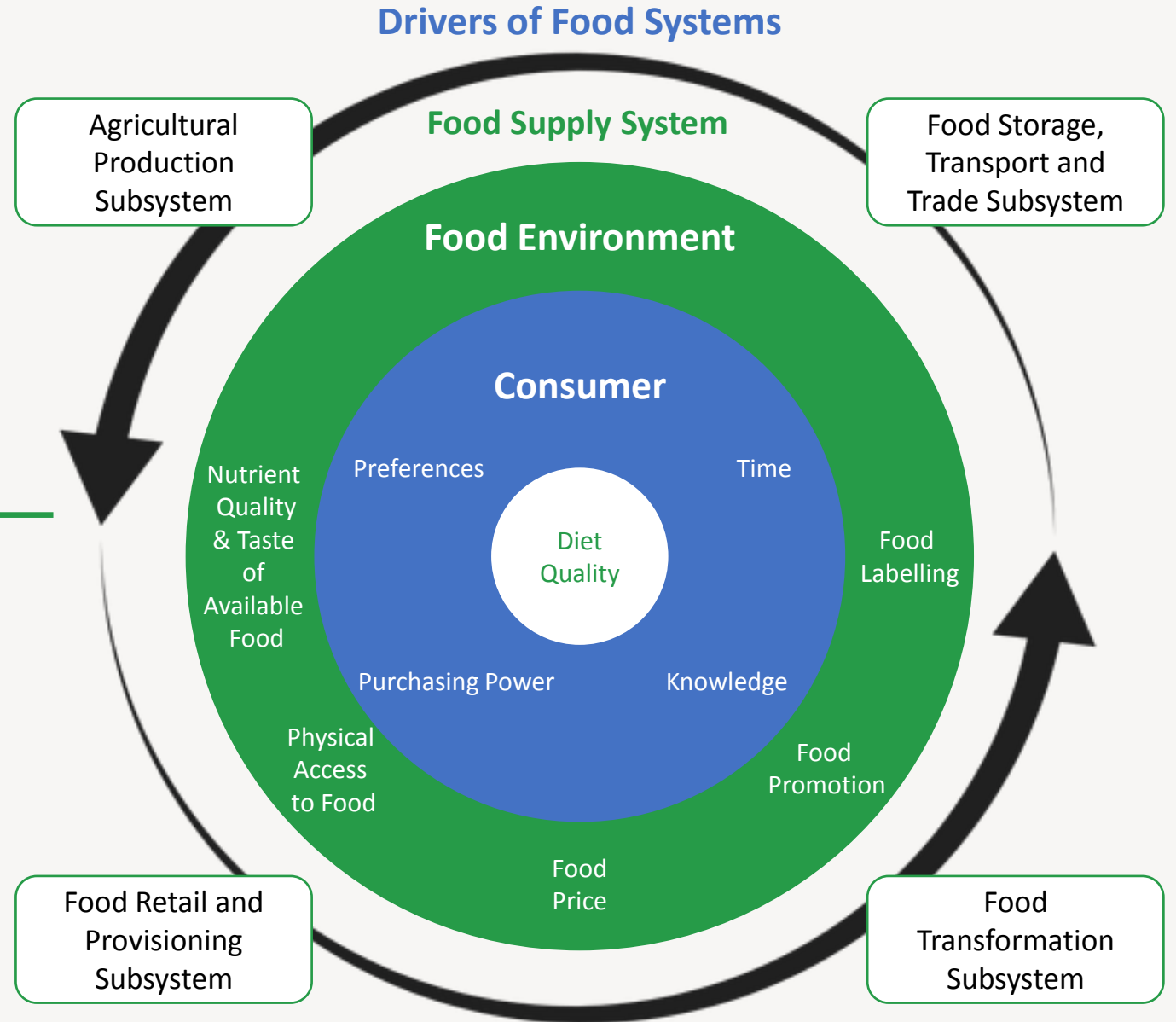
- Closing the Gender Gap Initiative (2023)
- Climate Related Matters/CoPs/African Climate Summit
- Volatile and Unpredictable Geopolitics/ Multipolarity of the global governance systems
- Post COVID related dynamics
- Interaction of Conflict, Climate Extremes and Economic Volatility

# Establishing the Basics of Food Systems and Transformation



# Understanding Food Systems

Food systems primarily produce food, comprise a broad set of components from production to consumption, and are influenced by social, political, demographic and other drivers.





# A Food Systems Approach is Key to Delivering Healthier Diets & Sustainable Development

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A food systems-focused development agenda that prioritizes healthy diets and affordable nutrition, and that is inclusive, efficient, resilient and sustainable while working for everyone will rebuild our economy, create jobs, spur growth across sectors and sustain our ecosystems.

**Well-functioning food systems must:**



Deliver high quality diet and affordable nutrition

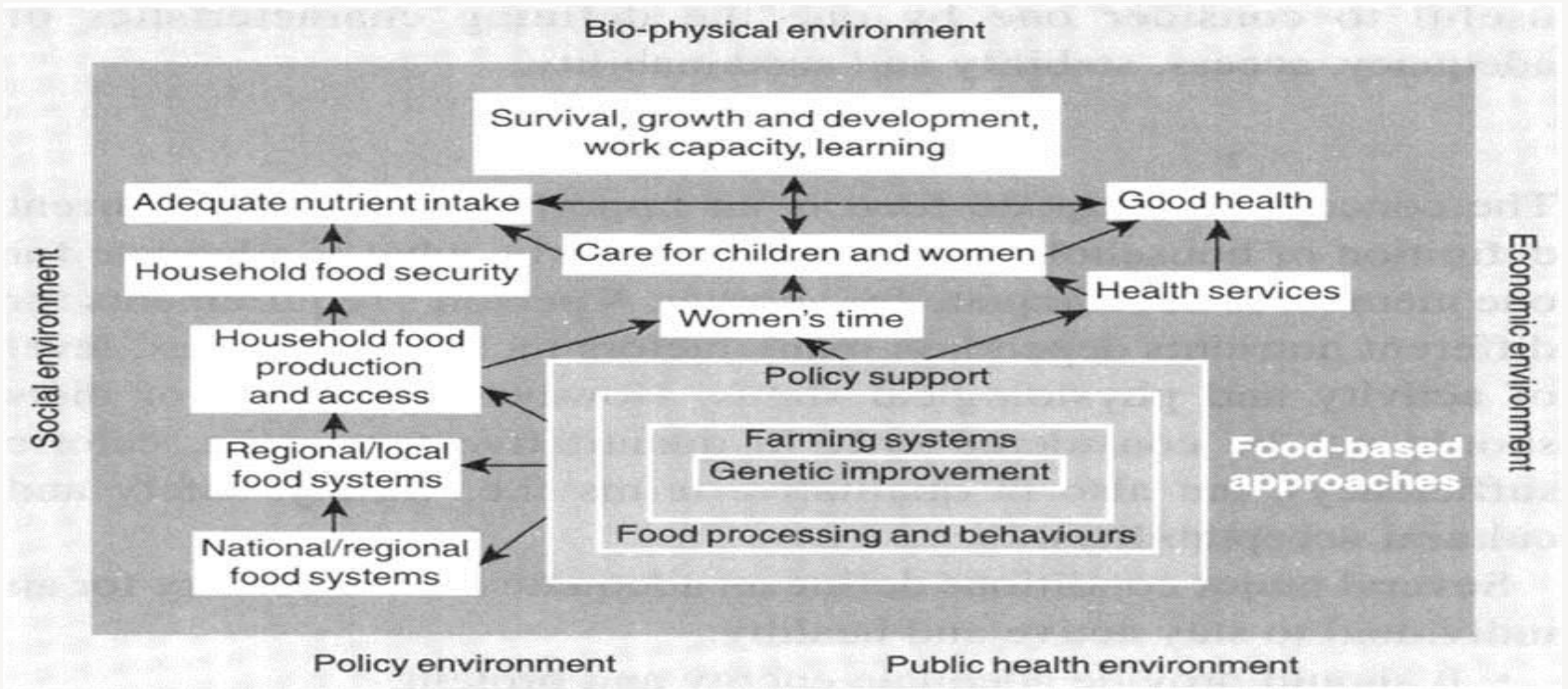
Be inclusive, efficient, resilient and sustainable



Work for everyone



# Food Systems are Shaped by a Number of Intersecting Environments



Source: Liebe et al. 2023; Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems

# What is Food Systems Transformation?

- A complete or radical change of something in form, function or appearance.
- Fundamentally changing the mode of operation to dramatically improve environmental, health and livelihood outcomes for society at large.
- Requires fundamental changes in the behavior of consumers, investors, agri-food sector firms, farmers, researchers and political leaders.
- A dramatic shift in economic and social incentive structures with the true cost of food embedded into how markets function.
- A future where all people have access to healthy diets produced in sustainable and resilient ways that restore nature and deliver equitable livelihoods.
- Resetting, repurposing and transforming towards having healthy people, healthy planet and healthy economies





# 'UN Systems' Definition of Healthy Diets

- A healthy diet is composed of a variety of nutritious and safe foods that provide dietary energy and nutrients in the amounts needed for a healthy and active life.
- Based on a wide range of unprocessed or minimally processed foods, balanced across food groups, while it restricts the consumption of highly processed foods and drink products
- Includes wholegrains, legumes, nuts, an abundance and variety of fruits and vegetables, and can include moderate amounts of eggs, dairy, poultry and fish, and small amounts of red meat.



- Healthy diets eliminate **hunger**, are **safe**, reduce **all forms of malnutrition**, promote **health** and are produced **sustainably**.



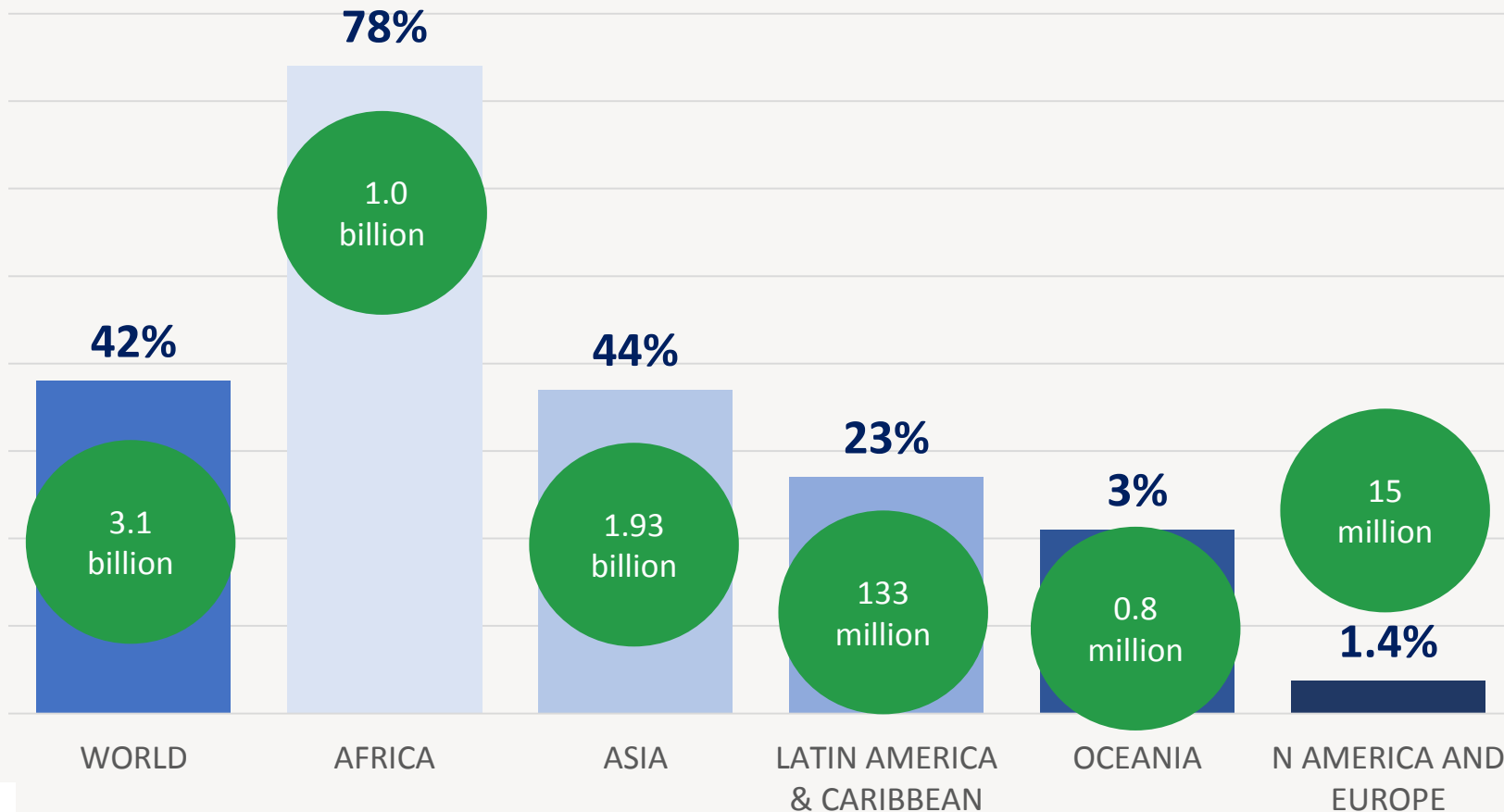


# Why would we need a Food Systems Transformation?



# Nigeria is part of the 1 Billion People in Africa that Cannot afford A healthy Diet

% of population unable to afford a healthy diet



- Women
- Rural /Per urban Areas
- Mostly in Africa
- And Asia

# Our Food System is Not Working for Everyone

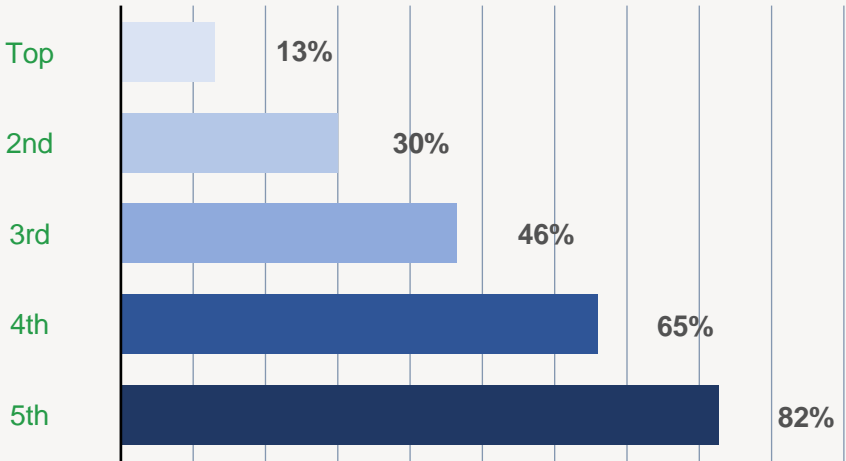
Low-income consumers are often underserved by markets in some fundamental ways

Diverse and healthy diets are not affordable for low-income consumers

Percentage of Households with High Food Expenditure (>75% of Total HH Resources)



By Wealth Quintile

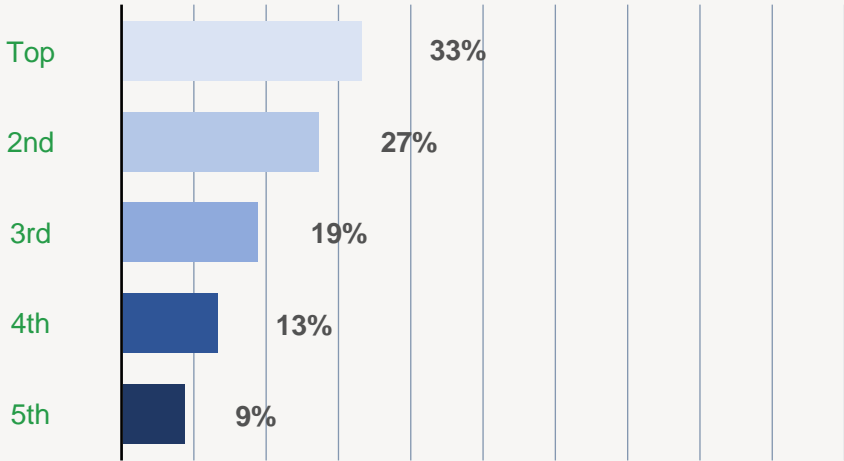


A huge portion of poor households devote >75% of household resources to food.

Percentage of Children 6-23 months with Adequately Diverse Diet



By Wealth Quintile



This likely contributes to the fact that children in wealthier households have more diverse diets—a key indicator of overall diet quality

**Over 90% of Nigerians cannot afford healthy diets that meet all food consumption recommendations**

Source: Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2013; Pathways to Food Systems Transformation, Nigeria, 2022.



# Food Safety Concerns Remain very Important

- We have significant food safety challenges across the food systems domain.
- FBD is most common and serious among vulnerable groups (the young, old, pregnant, immunosuppressed and malnourished)
- The most nutritious foods are also the most implicated in foodborne diseases (animal source food and fresh vegetables).
- We surrender our sovereignty to others when we allow unsafe foods to come through our borders.

## Unsafe Foods in Nigeria cause:

**1 in 11**

to fall ill each year

**21 million**

Cases of foodborne-related illness

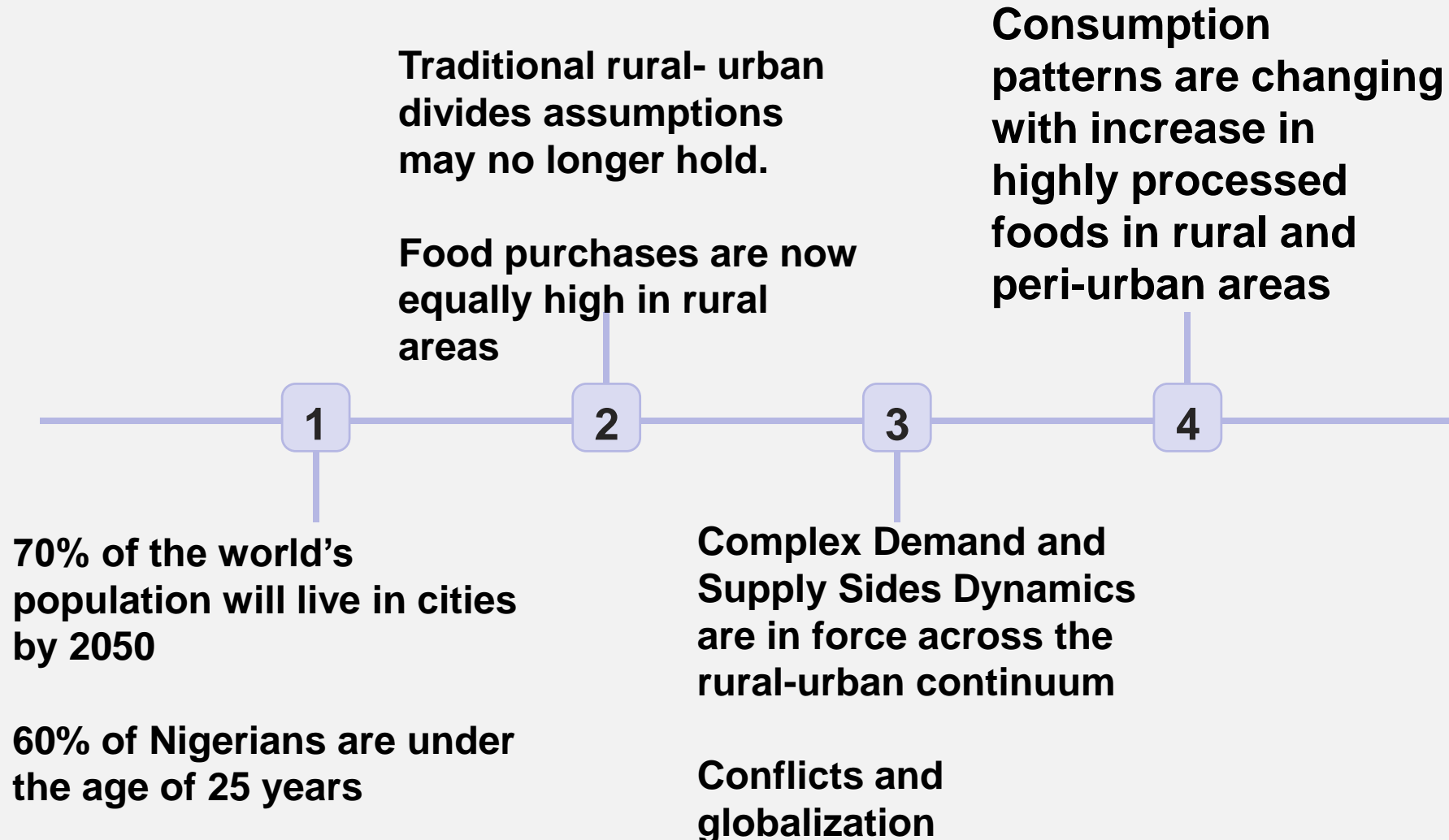
**\$16 Billion**

Annual loss of human capital due to from deaths  
from food borne diseases

# **We need to pay attention to Some Key Emerging Trends and Drivers that are Shaping the Food Market**

- **Relative to 2020 levels , the increased cost of a healthy diet was much larger in LMICs (6.2 percent increase), UMICs (5.1 percent) and LICs (4.7 percent), compared to HICs (2.1 percent)**
- **Food prices are rising when disposable income is declining in the midst of impactful conflicts, climate extremes and general and context-specific economic contractions**
- **The cost of healthy diets exceeds average food expenditure for low and middle income households**

# Urbanization and Evolving Demographic Transition Can No Longer be Ignored





# Some Concerning Global Trends with Implications for Nigeria

1

The global food and beverage industry is enormous and is experiencing strong growth, particularly in emerging and developing markets like Nigeria

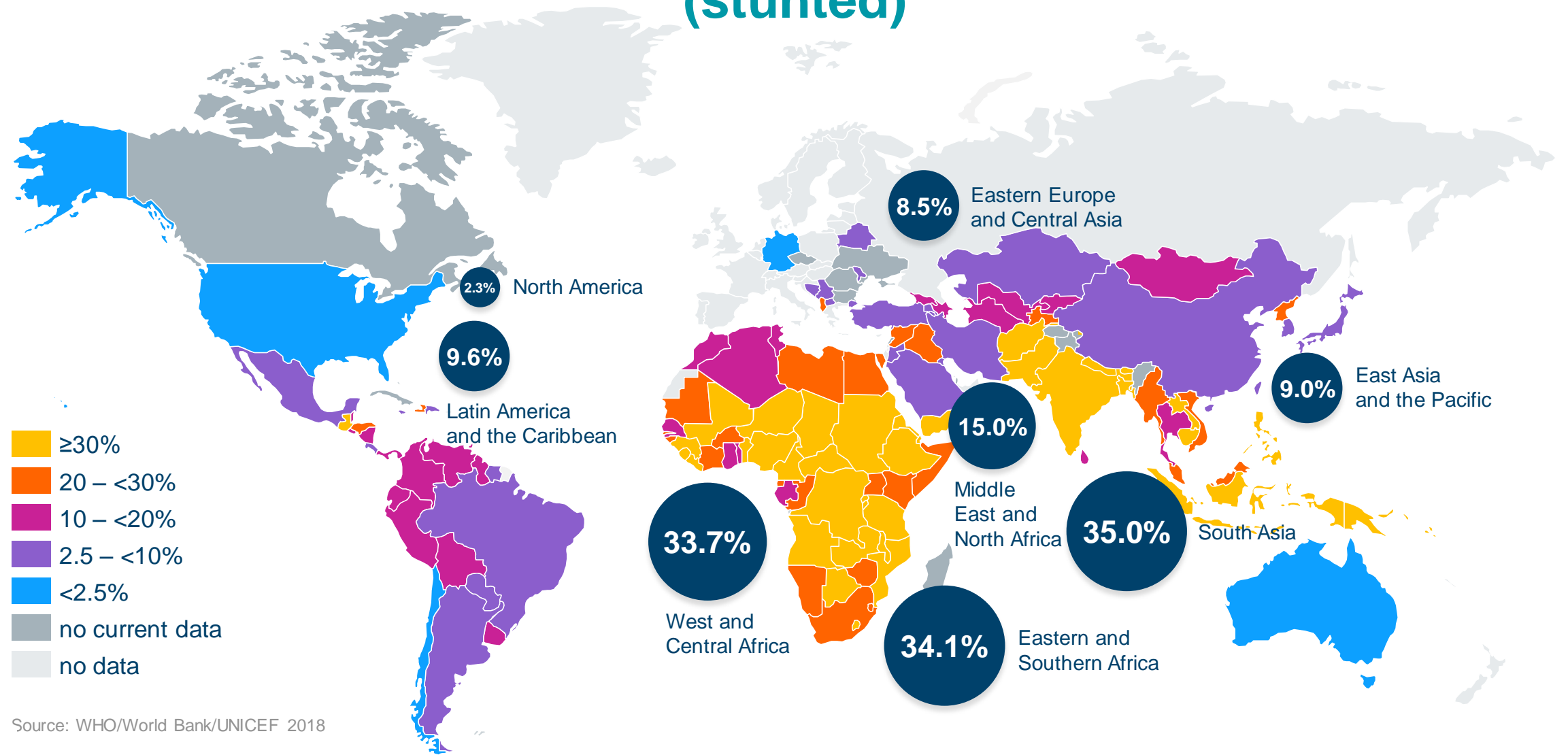
2

It grew by 10% between 2015 and 2019, and generated around \$3.1 trillion in revenue in 2019.

3

Although annual global food consumption costs are \$9 trillion, the estimated hidden costs are nearly twice this at \$20 trillion. The costs to human life due to unhealthy diets is \$11 trillion followed by environmental costs of \$7 trillion.

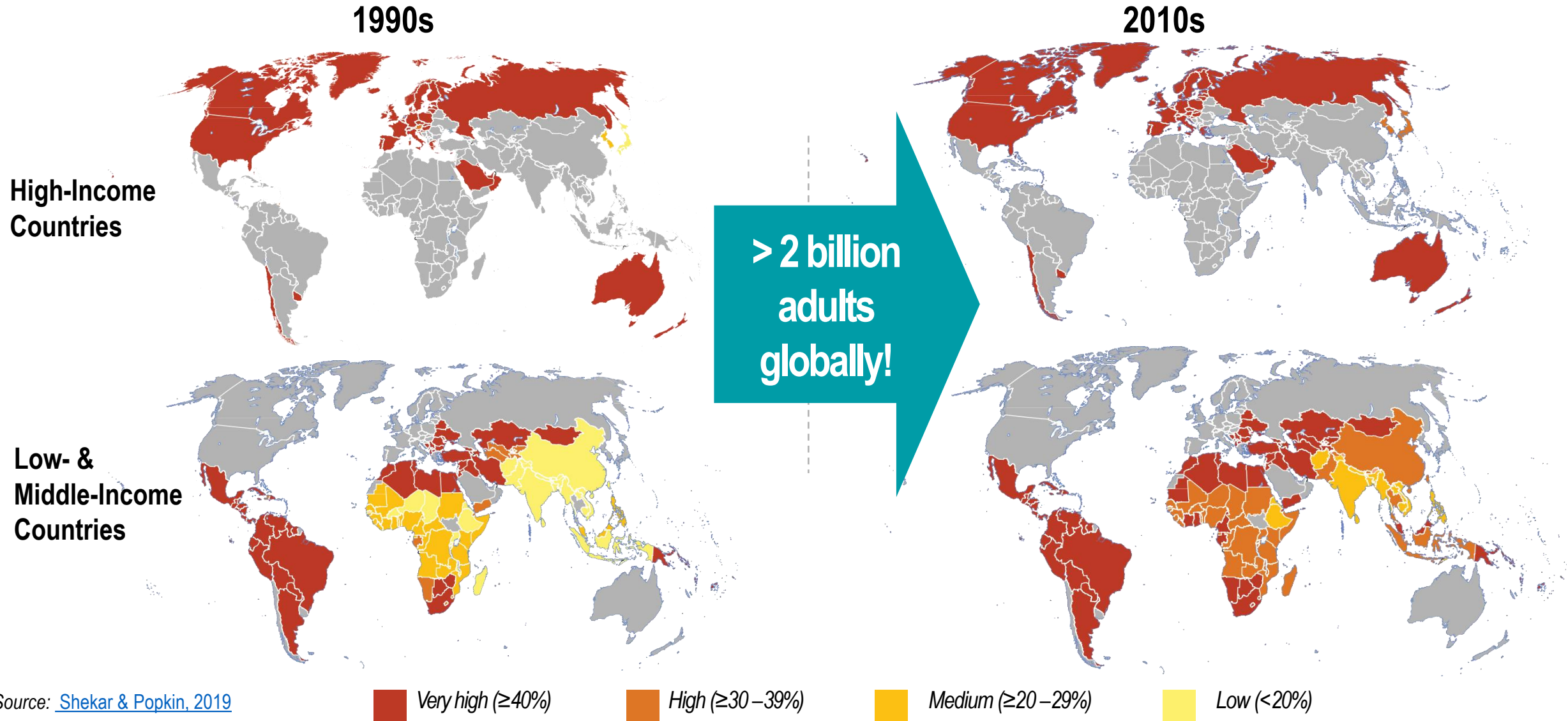
# Globally ~149M children are chronically undernourished (stunted)



Source: WHO/World Bank/UNICEF 2018



# Simultaneously Obesity is rising dramatically around the globe—with over half of adults overweight or obese





# Our Progress Trajectory is Seriously Challenged

**Nigeria is not on track to meet the SDG2 and other related Goals**

**Although we are half the time, we are not half the way**

**Even with concerning national levels of affordability gaps for healthy diets, significant variations across states, geopolitical regions are alarming**

**It is either our National Food System is broken or it is focused on the wrong outcomes or under some concerning influence**

# Key Highlights of our Evolving National Efforts towards Food Systems Transformation Pathways



# Key Priorities Earlier highlighted

- **Revolutionize Generation, Dissemination and Use of Weather Related Information**
- **Establish Farm Settlements and Estates/Food Processing Zones/ Integrated Value Chain Development**
- **Operation Feed Yourself /Equip Households with Information and Inputs to Grow Foods in their Homesteads**

A comprehensive outline of multisectoral priorities for action detailed in the National transformation Pathways Documents



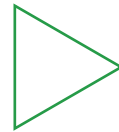
# Food Systems Transformation Imperatives for Consideration



# (1) Embrace and Project A New Food Systems Narrative

## OUTDATED NARRATIVE

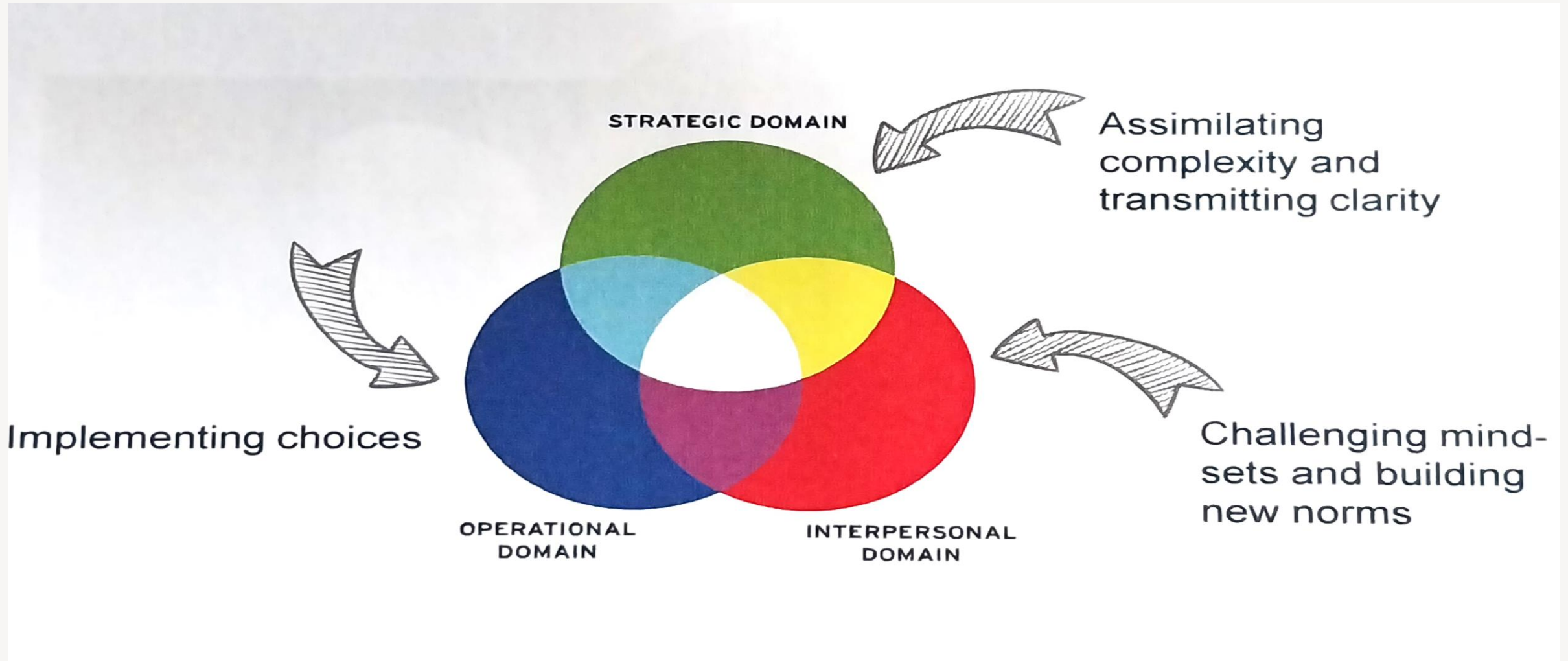
- Prevailing powerful but outmoded narratives have guided policy, research and investment priorities
- Outdated “feed the world” narrative does not address human health and nutrition, planetary health and sustainable development
- Based on export-oriented models informed more by external influencers than country contexts and priorities
- Motivated by factors unrelated to health and food systems sustainability
- Underlying conflicts of interest



## NEW NARRATIVE

- Brings everyone into a shared space
- Leverages the power of our diverse strengths and perspectives
- Makes human health and nutrition a priority
- Emphasizes diet quality and nourishment
- Addresses all forms of malnutrition and eliminating hunger
- Considers planetary health, sustainability
- Supports job creation, livelihoods and long-term sustainable economic development

# (2) Advance Execution with Excellence



### **(3) Systematize Political Engagement for Sustained Visibility, Scale and Impact**

- **The processes leading to and following the 2021 Global Food Systems Summit resulted in significant high profile political engagement in Nigeria.**
- **This brought visibility and support that needs be sustained for ensuring scale while amplifying impact.**
- **Locate food systems endeavors within the constitutional arrangement covering the executive, legislature and judiciary at key levels especially at the Federal, State and Local Government Areas.**
- **Project the food systems transformation imperatives within the context of our national development philosophy in line with the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy and other aspects of our constitution.**
- **Leverage available political avenues and build food systems transformation actions into key national development frameworks across the short-, medium- and long-term horizons.**
- **Reinterpret and Resurface what already exists in the National Development Plan, and Agenda 2050 in engaging the evolving political order and process.**



# (4) Adopt a Lifecycle Approach to Advancing Food Systems

- We should adopt a life-cycle approach to engaging our food systems.
- We should look at food systems across the life cycle
- Women of Reproductive Age/Maternal Nutrition
- Infants and Young Children,
- Adolescents
- Adult men and women-
- The Elderly and Old



## **(5) Build Considerations for Food Systems Resilience**

- **The onset of the COVID pandemic and the associated shocks and stresses amplified weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the Nigerian Food Systems**
- **These 7 LEAP4FNSSA guiding principles for building food systems resilience becomes quite important.**

- 1) Maintaining diversity and redundancy**
- 2) Managing connectivity**
- 3) managing slow variables and feedback**
- 4) fostering complex adaptive systems thinking**
- 5) Encourage learning;**
- 6) Broadening participation**
- 7) Promoting polycentric governance systems.**

# **(6) Adopt and Promote Climate Smart Practices**

- **Integrate Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies**
- **Improving productivity and building resilience**
  - **Regenerative Agriculture across all of its dimensions**
  - **Carbon farming and its unique and associative characteristics relative to regenerative agriculture**
  - **Precision Agriculture: help advance more engagement around its concepts and practices**
  - **Circular Economy Principles**
  - **Climate Smart Technologies and Innovations**
  - **Other climate smart agricultural concepts and practices across the food value chain**

# (7) OPERATIONALIZE THE NUTRITION EQUITY FRAMEWORK

↓ STRUCTURAL DETERMINANTS ↓

INTERMEDIATE DETERMINANTS

## SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXTS

- > **Institutions**  
Governance, Rules, Policy, State and commercial contexts
- > **Actors**  
Interests and power between governments, commercial entities and civil society
- > **Ideas**  
Cultural and social norms and values



## SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

- > **Social Position**  
Identity based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability etc.
- > **Capital and Potential**  
Education, livelihoods, wealth, social networks. Access to natural resources

## EXPERIENCES OF (IN)EQUITY

- Food, Care and Health Environments**
- Daily Living Conditions**  
Income, wealth, housing, water, physical space, labour conditions etc.

**Behaviours and Practices**  
Health and eating norms, attitudes and practices

SOCIAL DISTRIBUTION OF MALNUTRITION

INTER-GENERATIONAL AND INTER-TERRITORIAL EXPERIENCE

# (8) Expand and Deepen Leadership Development





# (9) Additional Portfolio of Recommended Actions

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**Operationalize resilient financing mechanisms leveraging domestic and international facilities**

**Ramp up investment in infrastructures that support critical innovations & opportunities**

**Scale/Democratize proven innovations**  
*(The common man at the common market)*

**Operationalize key guidelines rooted in transformed policies, data & the new narrative**

**Engage in fair trade, taking relevant country and global contexts into consideration**

**Foster transformative and smart partnerships with private sector and other actors**

# Thank You!

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