
SDG 2 and Food Systems Transformation in Asia and the Pacific

Food Systems Transformation Progress Review: Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting with the Food Systems National Convenors | 29 April 2024

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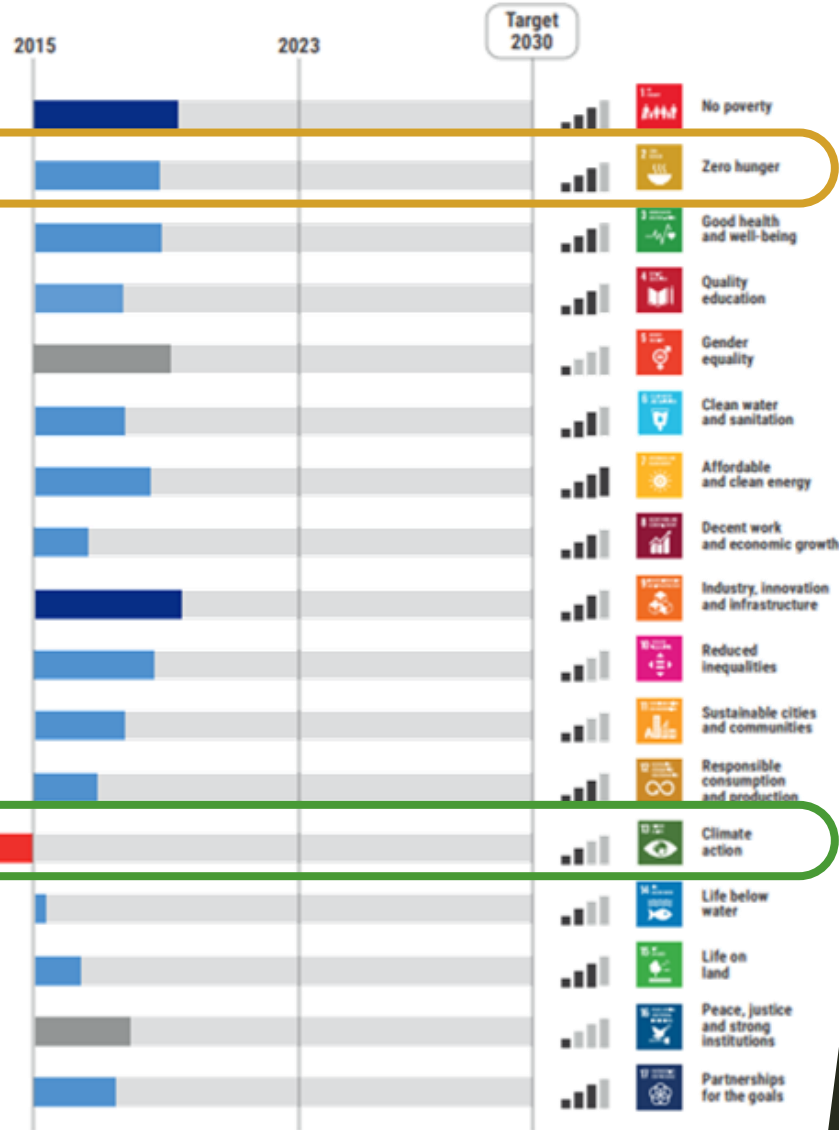
I. STATUS AND TRENDS

Insights from data

II. POLICY AND PRIORITIES

Insights from stakeholders

SDG progress in Asia & Pacific



Source: ESCAP. 2024. SDG Progress Report

Progress Regression Insufficient indicators Evidence strength

How does Asia and the Pacific fair on SDG2 indicators

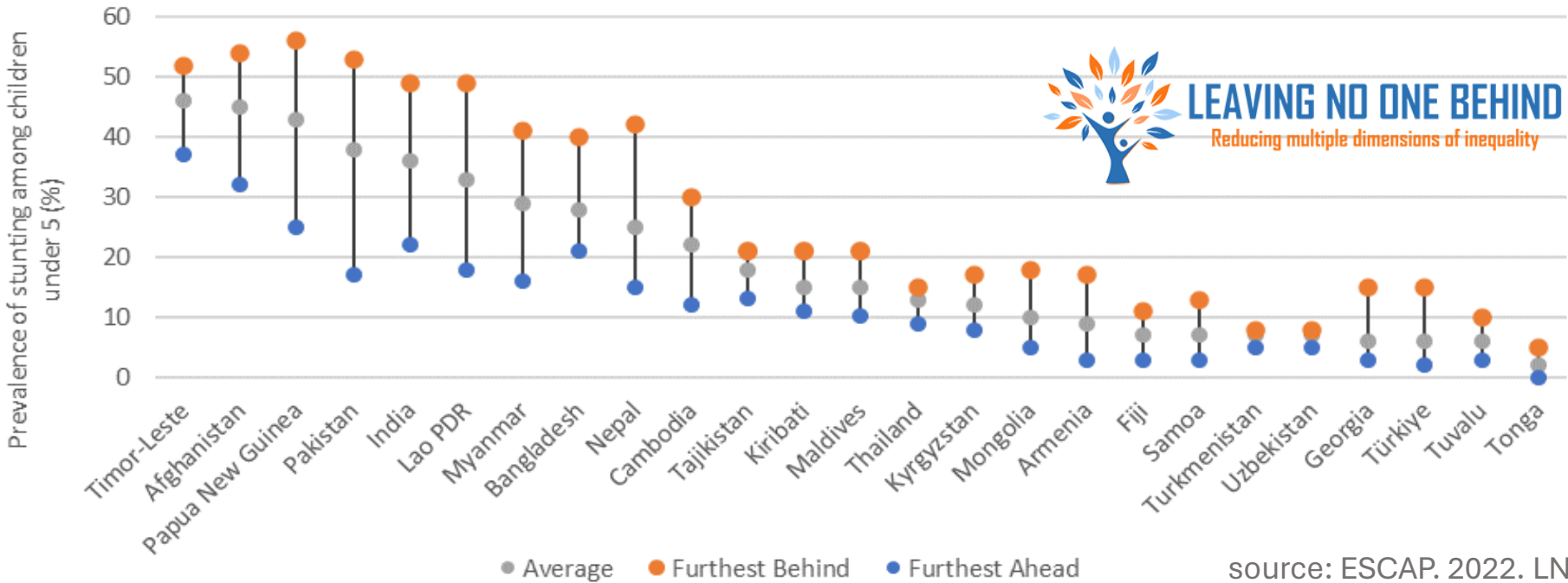
Little progress on hunger, food insecurity, except for malnutrition in Southeast Asia

- **402 million** people are undernourished (accounting for 56% of global total)
 - **24%** of people are at moderate or severe food insecurity
 - **44%** of people are unable to afford a healthy diet
 - Undernutrition persist among school aged children and adolescent
 - Obesity is on the rise, especially among the adults (1 billion people in the region are overweight or obese, accounting for 40% of the global total).
 - Severe food insecurity higher for women than men; more in South Asia and Western Asia
 - Limited progress on anemia among women with reproductive age
- ➔ **Food systems are increasingly at risk of climate change, conflicts, price/supply shocks and other multidimensional threats**

Food systems in Asia and the Pacific do not deliver food security for all

source: FAO et al. 2023. SOFI

	Child stunting (%)			Child overweight (%)			Child wasting (%)		Low birthweight (%)			Exclusive breastfeeding (%)		
	2012	2022	2030	2012	2022	2030	2022	2030	2012	2020	2030	2012	2021	2030
WORLD	26.3	22.3		5.5	5.6		6.8		15.0	14.7		37.0	47.7	
ASIA	28.2	22.3		4.8	5.1		9.3		17.2	17.2		39.0	51.5	
Central Asia and Southern Asia	39.3	29.4		2.9	2.9		13.7		25.4	23.5		46.5	59.4	
Central Asia	14.7	7.7		8.2	5.0		2.1		6.3	6.0		29.2	44.9	
Southern Asia	40.3	30.5		2.7	2.8		14.3		26.1	24.4		47.2	60.2	
Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia	16.0	13.9		6.5	8.0		4.2		8.1	8.7		30.3	41.5	
Eastern Asia	7.7	4.9		6.6	8.3		1.5		5.5	5.5		28.4	35.3	
South-eastern Asia	30.4	26.4		6.4	7.4		7.8		12.8	12.5		33.4	48.3	
OCEANIA EXCLUDING AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND	40.9	44.0		9.3	13.9		8.3		17.4	17.9		56.6	59.5	
Australia and New Zealand	3.4	3.4		12.4	19.3		n.a.		6.4	6.4		n.a.	n.a.	



Food systems are at the heart of environmental crises in Asia-Pacific



GHG emissions

24% of Asia's total greenhouse gas emissions come from the agri-food sector (40% of global total)



Air pollution

Agriculture air pollution exposure causes at least **450,000** premature deaths in Asia every year (85% of global total)



Deforestation

75% of forest area lost in Asia-Pacific is due to conversion to cropland.



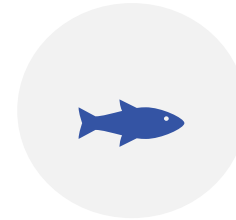
Land

60% of Asia-Pacific's grasslands are degraded due to overgrazing by livestock, conversion to agriculture, and alien species invasion.



Water

Agriculture accounts for **91%** of freshwater use in South Asia.



Marine resources

64% of the fisheries' resource base in Southeast Asia is at a medium to high risk from overfishing

Climate crisis

Asia-Pacific is the most disaster-prone region in the world and climate change is increasingly impacting on agriculture.

Biodiversity crisis

Asia-Pacific sees the most rapid and serious decline in biodiversity-related ecosystem services among all world regions. Nature loss is posing great threats to agri-food systems.

Land degradation

Around 17% of the total land area in **Central Asia** is expected to be unsuitable for agriculture by 2080 owing to unproductive soils.

Marine resource degradation

There will be no exploitable fish stock left in the ocean by 2050 following the current trends.

Food system risks in Asia and the Pacific

Research by ESCAP shows that food supply chains across the region are becoming **less climate resilient** and more vulnerable to shocks as food suppliers consolidate, and markets lose diversity.



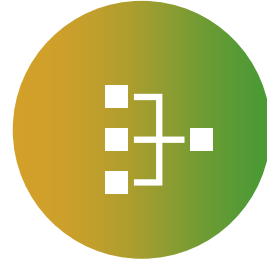
Demand increase & natural resource constraints

- Growing populations, city expansion, growing middle class
- Limited (and degraded) lands, soil, water, energy, nutrients, etc.



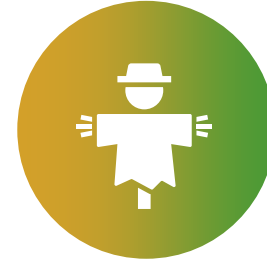
Declining agrobiodiversity

- Only 9 plant species accounted for two thirds of total crop production in 2014.
- Only a handful of animal species provide most of the global output of meat, milk, and eggs.



Consolidation of food suppliers

- In Asia, 2/3 of the farmland belong to only 6% of landowners with this trend set to worsen
- Vertical integration driven by market dynamics
- Increased privatization



Vulnerability of small-holder farmers & fishers

- Low prices & shrinking profit due to structurally weak position
- Lack of infrastructure & low productivity
- Vulnerable to risks and shocks including environmental changes
- Aging farmers



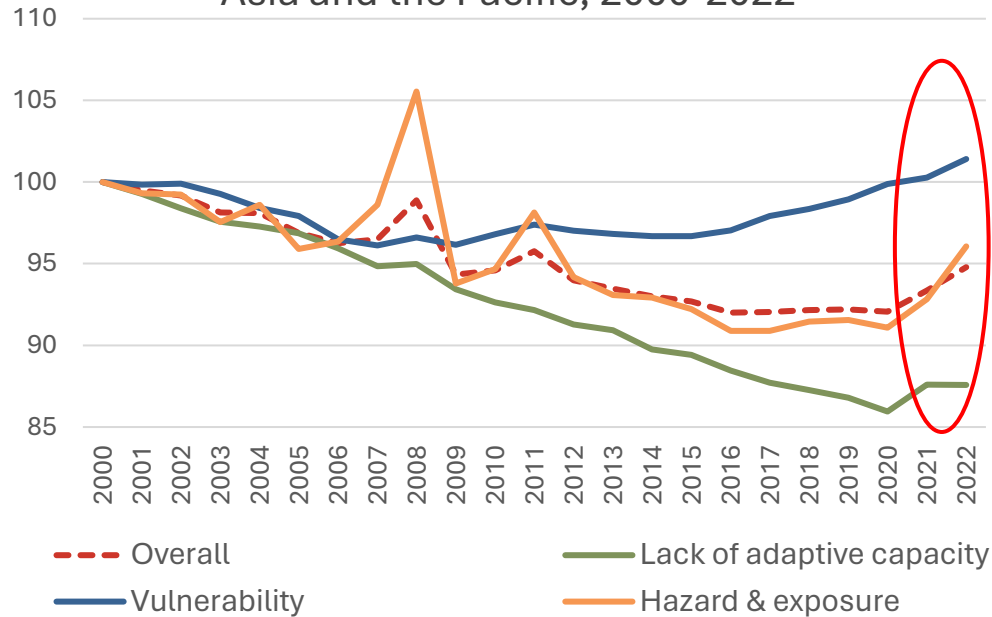
Gender inequality

- Women farmers represent nearly 50% of the agricultural workforce in East and Southeast Asia and around 30% in South Asia but face multiple constraints and inequalities, such as unequal access to land and productive inputs.

Data-based insights on Asia-Pacific food system risks

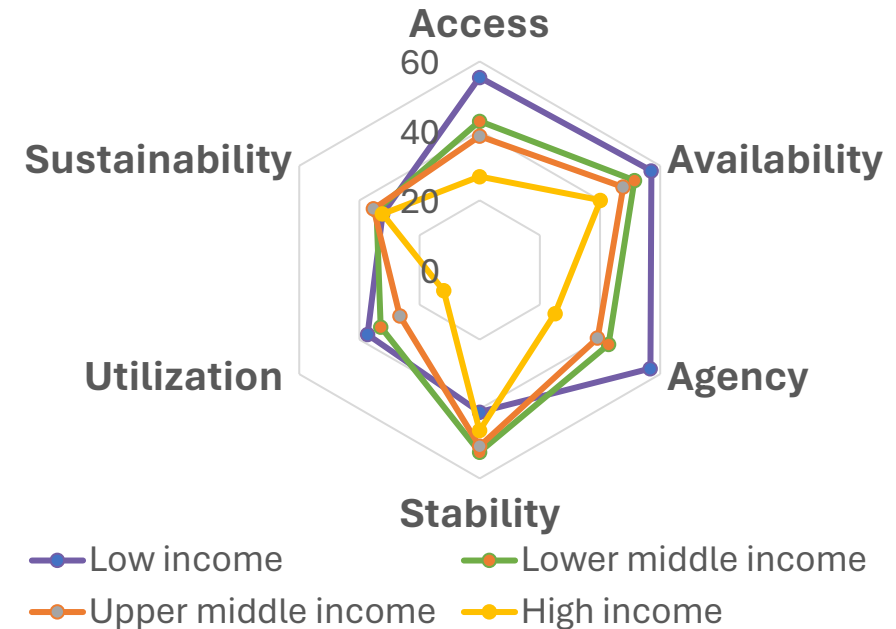
Change in food system risks

Asia and the Pacific, 2000-2022



Risk by food security dimension by income group

Asia and the Pacific, 2022



Implications:

Vulnerability has been on the rise since the 2007-2008 food price crisis.

Risks related to **hazard & exposure** and **lack of adaptive capacity** have **decreased (only slightly)** over the past 20 years, rising again in the last 3 years.

Implications:

- Low-income countries face relatively high risk in physical and economic access to food and ensuring agency.
- High-income countries face relatively high risk regarding environmental stresses and ensuring food systems stability.

Data-based insights on Asia-Pacific food system risks

- Risks have increased in most countries in the last 5 years
- Some countries face high *and* increasing risk (e.g. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and others)
- Risks are also increasing in some low-risk countries (e.g. Australia, Japan, Republic of Korea, and others.)
- Overall, risks have declined in some high-risk countries (e.g. India, Bangladesh, Vanuatu and others.)



Food system multidimensional risk assessment



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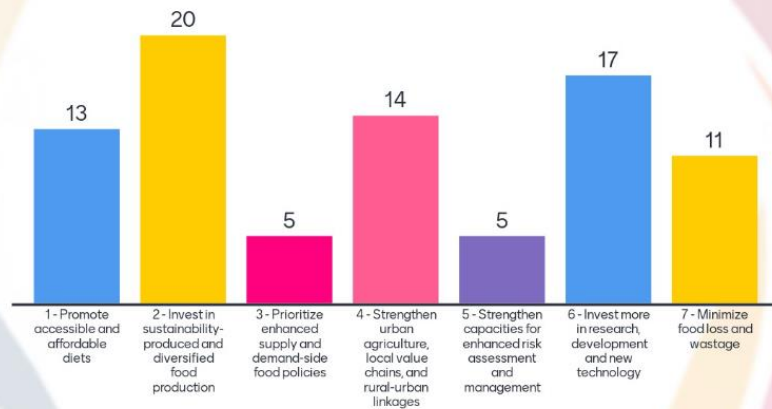
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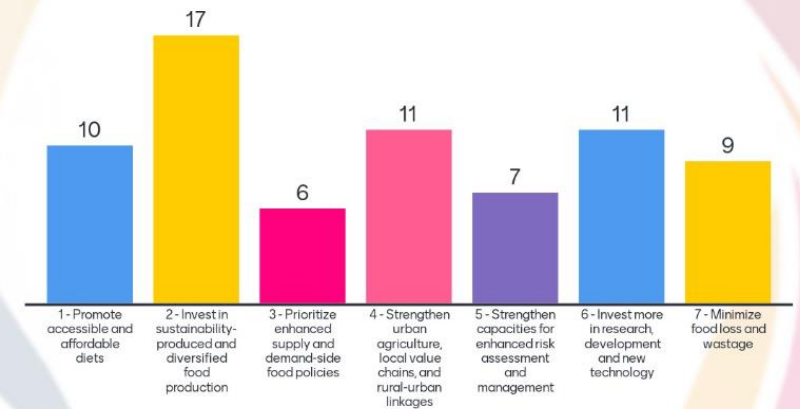
Priority action to achieve SDG2 – based on the SDG2 profile and stakeholders’ feedback at the SDG 2 Round Table of the Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development, February 2024



What are the **most impactful** actions to accelerate achievement of SDG2? (Select top 3)



What are the **most urgent** actions to accelerate achievement of SDG2 by 2030? (Select top 3)



Priority 1

1 - Promote accessible and affordable diets

2 - Invest in sustainability-produced and diversified food production

3 - Prioritize enhanced supply and demand-side food policies

Priority 3

4 - Strengthen urban agriculture, local value chains, and rural-urban linkages

5 - Strengthen capacities for enhanced risk assessment and management

Priority 2

6 - Invest more in research, development and new technology

7 - Minimize food loss and wastage

Elaborated recommendations – based on stakeholders’ feedback at APFSD11

Prioritizing holistic approaches

1. Promoting **agroecology approaches**, with attention to biodiversity, crop diversification and promotion of locally-produced food
2. Supporting greater investments in advancing **food sovereignty and food rights**, especially in promoting sustainable local production systems
3. Promoting a **One Health approach** to food production systems integrating human health, animal health, and environmental health

Focusing on farmers, including women and youth

4. **Empowering farmer producer organizations and family farmers** as agents of change in sustainable food production
5. Supporting farmers and small-scale enterprises to **acquire and use digital technology** and promote digital literacy
6. Targeted Interventions to **reduce costs of production**, and ensuring access to technology, resources, knowledge, and markets to make farming viable and sustainable
7. Boosting **youth engagement, employment and entrepreneurship** through technology and innovation;
8. Integrating and **empowering women**, including through security of land tenure and inheritance rights.

Strengthening markets

9. Improving **market linkages between farmers and consumers** and maximizing the value of economic benefits for producers
10. Ensuring **policy coherence between promoting self-sufficiency and maintaining trade policies** for food security and farmer protection
11. Engage with all actors to develop workable models that **reduce post-harvest loss, improve nutrition, and reduce environmental impacts**

Investing in other supporting policies

12. Focusing on **social protection** investments and ensuring safety nets to ensure access to food by the most vulnerable
13. Increasing investment in **research and education** on sustainable agrifood systems approaches such as agroecology
14. Strengthening **dialogues across countries** to address transboundary issues including water management

Policy trends

In Asia and the Pacific:

- ✓ Countries have raised the policy priority for food security.
- ✓ Many countries enacted measures specific to zero-hunger and poverty.
- ✓ COP28 as the food COP and the series of activities related to the food systems summit have raised the profile of the food-climate nexus
 - 38 countries have laid out national food systems transformation pathways, most of which have paid attention to climate change.
 - All countries have NDCs; and 13 countries have National Adaptation Plans. Food systems are mentioned in many of these plans but can be strengthened.

Country	FST	NAP
East and North-East Asia	4/5	0
China	✓	
Japan	✓	
Republic of Korea	✓	
Mongolia	✓	
DPR Korea		
South-East Asia	7/11	2/11
Cambodia	✓	✓
Timor-Leste	✓	✓
Indonesia	✓	
Lao PDR	✓	
Myanmar	✓	
Philippines	✓	
Viet Nam	✓	
Brunei Darussalam		
Malaysia		
Singapore		
Thailand		
South and South-West Asia	7/10	5/10
Bangladesh	✓	✓
Bhutan	✓	✓
Sri Lanka	✓	✓
Nepal	✓	✓
Pakistan	✓	✓
India	✓	
Türkiye	✓	
Afghanistan		
Maldives		
Iran (Islamic Republic of)		

Country	FST	NAP
North Central Asia	8/9	1/9
Armenia	✓	✓
Azerbaijan	✓	
Georgia	✓	
Kazakhstan	✓	
Kyrgyzstan	✓	
Russian Federation	✓	
Tajikistan	✓	
Uzbekistan	✓	
Turkmenistan		
Pacific	12/14	5/14
Fiji	✓	✓
Kiribati	✓	✓
Marshall Islands	✓	✓
Papua New Guinea	✓	✓
Tonga	✓	✓
Micronesia	✓	
Nauru	✓	
New Zealand	✓	
Palau	✓	
Tuvalu	✓	
Vanuatu	✓	
American Samoa	✓	
Australia		
Solomon Islands		

To learn more

Profile for SDG 2



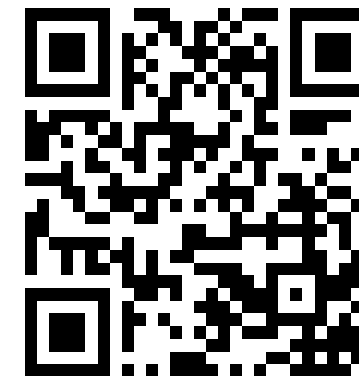
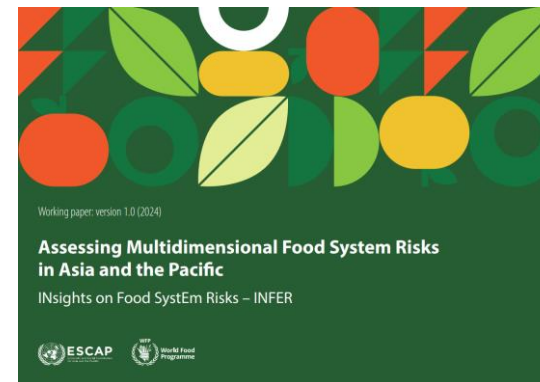
I. SUMMARY

Food systems face numerous multidimensional threats, including conflicts, climate change and price and supply shocks. These challenges hinder progress in human health and security, poverty, inequality, and development efforts, while worsening environmental degradation. Several structural issues in the region compound these challenges, such as growing instability in food systems, demographic shifts including ageing farmers, market concentration, barriers to adopting farmer-friendly technologies, limited access to finance, erosion of traditional knowledge and rapid urbanization affecting fragile urban food systems.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 underscores the global commitment to address the interconnected issues of food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture. As we approach the midpoint between the adoption of the SDGs in 2015 and the target year of 2030, it is essential to evaluate the progress and challenges in achieving SDG 2 across the Asia-Pacific region and other parts of the world.



INFER Insights on Food systems risks working paper & dashboard





THANK YOU!

