



# World Food Day 2019: Promoting healthy diets to achieve Zero Hunger

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On October 16, 150 countries led by the UN FAO will come together to take action and raise awareness about world hunger and the need to ensure healthy diets for all.

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After a period of decline, world hunger is on the rise again. According to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), currently more than 815 million people do not have enough to eat.

Increasing obesity is another major challenge in the fight against malnutrition: FAO data shows that over 670 million adults and 120 million girls and boys between the ages of 5 and 19 are obese, and over 40 million children under 5 are overweight. Today, obesity and other forms of malnutrition affect nearly one in three people with **projections indicating that the situation will worsen to one in two by 2025.**

## **But how did we get here?**

The answer might be in the linkage between hunger and excessive weight, which, despite seeming to be two contradictory phenomena, are closely connected.

The FAO website explains: "In recent decades we have dramatically changed our diets and eating habits as a result of globalization, urbanization and income growth. As a result, humans moved from seasonal, mainly plant-based and fiber-rich foods to diets high in refined starches, sugar, fats, salt, processed foods, meat and other animal-source products. A combination of unhealthy diets and sedentary lifestyles has sent obesity rates soaring, not only in developed countries, but also low-income countries, where hunger and obesity often coexist."

## Our Actions are our Future

The FAO's view is that achieving #ZeroHunger is not only about addressing hunger, but also nourishing people while nurturing the planet. Consequently, World Food Day 2019 calls for action across sectors to make healthy and sustainable diets affordable and accessible to everyone. At the same time, it calls on everyone to **start thinking about what we eat** through its 2019 theme: **Our Actions are our Future.**

"The Global Pulse Confederation is committed to working together with FAO to raise awareness about the need to change the way we eat," says GPC President Cindy Brown.

Ms. Brown, who was elected GPC President in June 2019, continues to reinforce the strategic partnership that the GPC and the United Nations have built, especially after the launch of the International Year of Pulses 2016 and the proclamation of World Pulses Day in 2018.

"As members of this industry, we are already familiar with the unique attributes of pulses, all of which are critical to achieving the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals: They are a healthy, sustainable and affordable protein source. Moreover, pulse crops have low carbon and water footprints relative to most foods and can help reduce food waste thanks to their extended shelf life," says President Brown.

"The International Year of Pulses and World Pulses Day have been instrumental in helping to amplify the message about the benefits of pulses for the people and for the planet. Now, World Food Day raises the challenge of engaging consumers — especially younger generations — as they transition from passive buyers to active creators in the food industry. This implies helping them understand their countries' dietary guidelines, offering tools so that they can read and comprehend nutrition labels and encouraging them to ask for healthier and more sustainable food choices at work or in their communities. Looking to the future, this is the challenge that we shall be pursuing as members of this industry."

### **A #ZeroHunger world is possible**

Achieving Zero Hunger is the second of the ambitious 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by 193 Member States in 2015. To meet the various targets by 2030, the UN is raising awareness with governments, the private sector, individuals and farmers.