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Bold investments needed to address challenging nutritional burden in Africa

17 February 2025 | News

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The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), QU Dongyu, told African leaders gathered in Addis Ababa that â??bold investmentsâ?• are needed to achieve our collective vision for economic growth and development in Africa, a continent that continues to face unacceptably high levels of hunger and malnutrition.

Qu was invited to address a High-Level Side Event at the 38th African Union (AU) Summit, hosted by the King of Lesotho, King Letsie III, who is also FAO Goodwill Ambassador for Nutrition, on ways of finding a common position to address malnutrition in Africa.

As the world struggles to meet its Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) and global nutrition targets, the situation is particularly challenging in Africa, where, according to the latest State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) Report, 298 million people â?? or 1 out of 5 â?? faced hunger in 2023. Additional data from 2022 shows that 924.8 million Africans could not afford a healthy diet, 63.1 million young children were stunted, and 10.2 million children were overweight. Furthermore, 123.9 million adults were obese, and 122.7 million women aged between 15 and 49 years of age were affected by anaemia.

The theme of todayâ??s meeting â??tells us that despite the gains we have made in making nutrition a key policy agenda in Africa, a lot more needs to be done to translate these policies and commitments into concrete actions to ensure healthy diets and adequate nutrition for every individual on the continent, leaving no one behind,â?• the Director-General said.