Twitter Thread by Edward Davey



Edward Davey
@edwardleodavey

A few thoughts on food and land use 2021. This year, and throughout the decade ahead, the world has before it a remarkable obligation and opportunity to bring about a fairer, more inclusive, more sustainable and more resilient food and land use system.

Such a system would ensure that every human being has access to a healthy and nutritious diet; that all the world's farmers and fishermen live dignified lives; and that the food system itself causes no further loss of biodiversity, no more climate change, and no more pandemics.

To achieve such a food and land use system would require concerted international effort – from governments, companies, farmer's associations, scientists, and communities – akin in scale and ambition to the quest for a Covid-19 vaccine.

The good news is that a global pivot to more sustainable agriculture, healthier diets, & reduced food loss and waste – coupled with a major effort to protect and restore nature – would generate millions of jobs, as well as sustained economic growth and improved well-being.

To achieve these ambitious aims, action in four areas is urgently needed in 2021 and through the decade:
1.Increase flows of finance to fighting hunger. In the course of the past year alone, the number of acutely food insecure people in the world has risen to 690 million.

Of these, 235 million people are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance and protection, including in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Yemen, Nigeria and Burkina Faso, where there is an immediate risk of famine.

Across the world, urgent efforts must be made to address the shortfall in humanitarian funding and to alleviate the chronic food and nutrition insecurity exacerbated by the pandemic.

2.Ensure all people can access and afford nutritious, healthy food. As exchange rates fluctuate and economies flounder, food prices have risen. In total, three billion people in the world today cannot afford the food that they need to ensure their and their families' well-being.

Malnutrition is a scourge in every country. Governments must expand social safety nets, enact policies that ensure access to affordable healthy food, and keep national as well as global agricultural markets open.

https://t.co/YMgyRfGrkM a new deal with the world's farmers. The pandemic has revealed farmers to be among the world's most important keyworkers. They deserve to be appropriately compensated for the food they produce.

They also deserve to be more generously rewarded for their efforts to shift to more sustainable agricultural practices. Today, the world spends at least US$600 billion each year on agricultural subsidies.

Much of this money could be imaginatively redeployed in fiscally constrained circumstances to deliver better outcomes for farmers, consumers, the climate and the environment.

Governments can also reform their subsidy and regulatory regimes to encourage greater consumption of healthier foods, and to address high rates of obesity and other non-communicable diseases (themselves linked to the impact of the pandemic).

4.Protect and restore the natural world. Protecting and restoring nature would bring big benefits for people, the climate, and biodiversity. Whether on land or at sea, there is a huge amount to be done to safeguard the rights of indigenous peoples . . .

. . . to fund and implement protected areas, and to appropriately plan national economies so as to protect and restore key ecosystems and landscapes.

Countries can and must work together in a spirit of partnership to this end, establishing new and ambitious alliances, for example to protect the world's remaining tropical rainforests. Such actions would also generate significant numbers of jobs in the 'new nature economy' . . .

as well as ensure a truly sustainable, long-term recovery.

No fewer than 10 global meetings in 2021 – beginning with the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture hosted by the German government in January, and culminating in the Nutrition for Growth summit hosted by the Japanese in December – present an opportunity to drive significant ...

political commitment, regulation and financial flows in the direction of a more sustainable food and land use system. The UN Secretary General's Food Systems Summit in September – on the sidelines of the General Assembly...

, and to which all the heads of state in the world have been invited – will be a particular highlight. The G7, hosted by the UK, and the G20, by Italy, are important milestones, with the UK focused on climate and nature, and Italy on hunger.

The biodiversity and climate meetings planned in May & November, hosted by the Chinese and British governments respectively, are also a significant opportunity for countries to come forward with a compelling vision and set of commitments for implementation over the decade ahead.

There is little time to lose, and a rare opportunity to ‘build back better’ with a focus on that one thing which binds the whole of humanity and our relationship with the natural world together: food.