

STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL MUTUAL LEARNING IN FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SECURITY: THE ROLE OF BRAZIL'S G20 PRESIDENCY

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The Global Alliance against hunger and poverty launched by Brazil's Group of Twenty (G20) Presidency builds on a long history of G20 efforts to address global food and nutritional insecurity. However, unlike previous initiatives, which focused primarily on the G20's contribution to addressing hunger in low-income countries, the Global Alliance has the potential to innovate significantly, strengthening mutual learning for domestic policy action *within* G20 countries, while enhancing North-South, South-South (SSC) and Trilateral Development Cooperation (TDC). Hunger and poverty are not limited to lower-income countries. Severe food insecurity increased in every region in 2021, including in high-income areas and across all G20 countries. With reference to the experience of the United Kingdom, we argue that given the universal framing of the Sustainable Development Goals, the fact that the world is currently off track to achieve the goal of Zero Hunger should encourage G20 countries to support multilateral action at the global level while intensifying policy learning to support their own domestic efforts to tackle these challenges. In recent decades, TDC and SSC enabled many Global South countries including Brazil to engage in knowledge-sharing around effective policies to tackle hunger and poverty. We draw on two examples that build on Brazil's experience with strong civil society and academia engagement; and propose a strategy for enhancing TDC's potential to foster mutual learning on hunger and poverty reduction among G20 countries, as well as action by G20 members to support other countries and strengthen United Nations (UN) led multilateral efforts. We also discuss risks and opportunities for the Alliance to support scaling up local and national innovations to address entrenched and intersecting inequalities.

Keywords: poverty; hunger; SSC/TDC; mutual learning; universality; G20.

O PAPEL DO G20 EM FORTALECER A COOPERAÇÃO E O APRENDIZADO MÚTUO PARA A SEGURANÇA ALIMENTAR E NUTRICIONAL

A Aliança Global contra a fome e a pobreza lançada pela Presidência brasileira do Grupo dos Vinte (G20) baseia-se numa longa história de esforços do G20 para enfrentar a insegurança alimentar e nutricional em escala global. No entanto, ao contrário de iniciativas anteriores centradas principalmente na contribuição do G20 para combater a fome nos países de baixa renda, a Aliança

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Global tem o potencial para inovar de forma significativa, fortalecendo o aprendizado mútuo para a ação política doméstica nos países do G20, ao mesmo tempo que reforça a Cooperação Norte-Sul, Sul-Sul (CSS) e Trilateral (CSST). A fome e a pobreza não se limitam aos países de baixa renda. A insegurança alimentar grave aumentou em todas as regiões do mundo em 2021, incluindo em lugares com renda elevada, e em todos os países do G20. A partir da experiência do Reino Unido, argumentamos que dado o caráter universal dos Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (ODS), o fato de o mundo estar longe de alcançar o ODS 2 de Fome Zero deveria encorajar os países do G20 a apoiar a ação multilateral em nível global, intensificando simultaneamente o aprendizado político para apoiar seus próprios esforços a fim de enfrentar esses desafios no contexto doméstico. Nas últimas décadas, a CSS e a CSST permitiram que muitos países do Sul global, entre os quais o Brasil, partilhassem conhecimentos sobre políticas eficazes no combate à fome e à pobreza. Baseamo-nos em dois exemplos ancorados na experiência do Brasil com um forte envolvimento da sociedade civil e da academia, e propomos uma estratégia para aumentar o potencial da cooperação internacional para promover a aprendizagem mútua sobre a fome e a redução da pobreza entre os países do G20, bem como ações dos membros do G20 para apoiar outros países e fortalecer os esforços multilaterais liderados pelas Nações Unidas (ONU). Discutimos também os riscos e oportunidades para a Aliança apoiar a expansão de inovações em escala local e nacional para abordar desigualdades enraizadas e interseccionais.

Palavras-chave: pobreza; fome; CSS/CSST; aprendizado mútuo; universalidade; G20.

EL ROL DEL G20 EN FORTALECER LA COOPERACIÓN PARA EL DESARROLLO Y EL APRENDIZAJE MUTUO EN LA SEGURIDAD ALIMENTARIA Y NUTRICIONAL

La Alianza Global contra el hambre y la pobreza lanzada por la presidencia brasileña del Grupo de los Veinte (G20) se basa en una larga historia de esfuerzos del G20 para abordar la inseguridad alimentaria y nutricional mundial. Sin embargo, a diferencia de iniciativas anteriores que se han centrado principalmente en la contribución del G20 a la lucha contra el hambre en los países de bajos ingresos, la Alianza Global tiene el potencial de aportar innovaciones importantes, fortaleciendo tanto el aprendizaje mutuo para la acción política interna en los países del G20, como la Cooperación Sur-Norte, Sur-Sur (CSS) y Trilateral (CSST). El hambre y la pobreza no se limitan a los países de bajos ingresos. La inseguridad alimentaria grave aumentó en todas las regiones del mundo en 2021, incluidos los lugares de altos ingresos, y en todos los países del G20. A partir de la experiencia del Reino Unido, argumentamos que dado el carácter universal de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS), el hecho de que el mundo esté lejos de alcanzar el ODS 2 de Hambre Cero debería alentar a los países del G20 a apoyar la acción multilateral a nivel global, al tiempo que intensifica el aprendizaje de políticas para apoyar sus propios esfuerzos para abordar estos desafíos en el contexto doméstico. En las últimas décadas, CSS y CSST han permitido a muchos países del "Sur Global", incluso el Brasil, compartir conocimientos sobre políticas eficaces para combatir el hambre y la pobreza. Arraigamos el análisis en dos ejemplos que documentan la experiencia de Brasil con respecto a cultivar un fuerte compromiso por parte de la sociedad civil y la academia. Además, proponemos una estrategia para aumentar: el potencial de CSST para promover el aprendizaje mutuo sobre la reducción del hambre y la pobreza entre los países del G20; y acciones de los estados miembros del G20 para apoyar a otros países y fortalecer los esfuerzos multilaterales liderados por la Organización de las Naciones Unidas (ONU). También discutimos los riesgos y oportunidades con respecto al apoyo de la Alianza acerca de la expansión de innovaciones locales y nacionales para abordar desigualdades arraigadas e interseccionales.

Palabras clave: pobreza; hambre; CSS/CSST; aprendizaje mutuo; universalidad; G20.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The changing landscape of international cooperation against hunger and poverty

Hunger and poverty remain severe in low-income countries, but they are becoming more universalised: severe food insecurity increased across every region of the world in 2021, including in high-income areas, according to a Group of Twenty (G20) commissioned report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Bank (WB) in 2023. Even prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, however, poverty and inequality were on the rise in developed and developing countries alike, alongside growing malnutrition, overweight and obesity, and other diet-related non-communicable diseases (ibid., 2023). All data show the world is “off track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 2 of Zero Hunger” (United Kingdom, 2019), and progress has stalled or reversed since 2015, according to the 2023 Global Hunger Index (GHI, 2023; WB, 2023). Hunger and other forms of food insecurity currently affect almost 828 million people daily, while 700 million people live in extreme poverty – including in high income countries (GHI, 2023; WB, 2023). Yet this is above all a political problem: in a world with enough resources, the normalisation of poverty and inequitable food systems is not inevitable, and neither are hunger, poor diets and rising obesity (Cabral et al., 2023).

The fight against poverty has been at the heart of international development cooperation efforts, at least discursively, since the 1990s. However, these efforts largely focused on tackling poverty, hunger and malnutrition in low-income countries of the Global South, taking a food production-based approach which assumed that hunger in these countries resulted from insufficient agricultural output or from deficient access to markets, rather than from barriers to access to healthy food caused by injustices in the food system. In addition to privileging engagement with transnational corporate food suppliers, this led to development cooperation paying less attention to food insecurity in middle-income countries and almost none to high-income ones. This is at odds with the consensus that all forms of food insecurity and malnutrition should be within the scope of international commitment, given how rapidly patterns of malnutrition can shift as countries undergo economic transition and urbanisation (Ayala and Meier, 2017; Santarelli, Vieira and Constantine, 2018).

In this section we draw on the experience of two G20 member states to illustrate some of the different approaches to poverty and hunger within G20 countries, and some of the opportunities this context provides for a G20-led Global Alliance on poverty and hunger. We focus on Brazil, the originator of the proposed Global Alliance; and the United Kingdom, a country which under its last government reduced its support for global nutrition but was said to remain committed “to being a world leader on nutrition (...) [placing] nutrition amongst [its] highest development priorities” according to Andrew Mitchell, Minister for Africa and Development at the time (Hope, 2023). Brazil is of particular interest given its cognitive authority in policies addressing poverty and hunger, based on its experience on tackling these issues domestically. The United Kingdom was a strong proponent of pro-poor development and an active leader in nutrition initiatives in international development; and has some experience in tackling poverty and food security domestically, although not in recent years, when both have become very visible elements of life in Britain.

1.2 The United Kingdom: hunger at home amidst global nutrition leadership claims

The United Kingdom led global efforts on nutrition for many years, and despite significant cuts to its Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), in 2022 the United Kingdom provided US\$1.9 billion to global nutrition, making it the third largest donor globally (Global Nutrition Report, 2022). It also convenes high-level international dialogues on food security, such as the Global Food Security Summit in 2023, co-hosted with Somalia, the United Arab Emirates, the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Hope, 2023). However, there is a historic disconnect between what is done internationally and domestic policy, except for in relations with corporate food system actors, who the United Kingdom treats as allies rather than obstacles on the road to universal access to healthy food at home and abroad. Successive United Kingdom governments have yet to acknowledge the relevance of international efforts for its domestic policies to tackle food insecurity at home, despite civil society and think-tanks’ best efforts. For example, in opening the 2023 Global Food Security Summit in London, former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s only reference to the United Kingdom’s domestic context was regarding “a new UK CGIAR Science Centre to drive cutting-edge research on flood tolerant rice, disease resistant wheat and much more. These innovations will reach millions across the poorest countries, as well as improving UK crop yields and driving down food prices”.⁵

5. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-remarks-at-the-food-security-summit-20-november-2023>.

However, despite the weight of evidence on the increasing prevalence of hunger in the country in the last fifteen years, alongside rising rates of obesity, and the rapid rise in the number of British people living in absolute poverty (UK Department of Work and Pensions, 2024), there has been no significant government action – including from the Labour Party government elected in 2024 – on addressing hunger and poverty in Britain. The former Prime Minister Gordon Brown recently called for action “to halt Britain’s slide into a ‘hungry decade’ of destitution and hardship” (Butler, 2024), underscoring that this epidemic of hunger is entirely avoidable (Brown, 2024 c).

Currently, there is no overarching national policy on domestic food and nutrition security (FNS) in the United Kingdom, and food policy works very differently in each of the United Kingdom’s Devolved Administrations (Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales), and differently again in English cities and municipalities. In England, responsibility for food and nutrition policy is fragmented across sixteen different government departments (Parsons, 2020). Despite government commissioning a National Food Strategy to coordinate food and nutrition policy in the United Kingdom in 2019, it was not implemented, and although advocates hoped that the new government would implement its recommendations after taking office in July 2024 this has not yet come to pass.

There is broad consensus that the National Food Strategy offers a robust plan with implementable solutions. These were developed in consultation with stakeholders across the food system, and could address some of the deep-seated food inequalities in the United Kingdom by expanding access to healthy food, particularly for low-income groups, promoting sustainable farming practices, reducing unhealthy food consumption through taxation and reformulation, and improving food education, thereby ensuring everyone can access a healthy, affordable diet across the population (Dimbleby, 2020). However, challenging the vested interests in the food system requires political commitment.

In addition to the moral argument, there is a strong economic rationale for the implementation of a robust governance structure to address food and nutrition (in)security issues in the country; for example, based on data from over a decade ago, “The cost of malnutrition in England alone was estimated to be £19.6 billion per year in 2011/12, or more than 15% of the total public expenditure on health and social care” (Elia, 2015). There are already some programmes in the United Kingdom which attempt to address some of these problems, but they currently lack the necessary depth and breadth. For example, the Healthy Start scheme provides vouchers for fruit, vegetables, pulses and milk for low-income families with pregnant women and young children, but has very low take-up. It has been proposed that it be expanded to include the Community Eatwell Programme, which was piloted with promising results, enabling family

doctors (General Practitioners) to prescribe fruit and vegetables to people suffering, or at risk of suffering, from diet related illness or food insecurity.

In January 2024, data showed 15% of United Kingdom households went hungry, including 1 in 5 families with children. Food price inflation in the United Kingdom rose even more steeply than in other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries in recent years, and despite decreasing in the last year, food prices remain high, which means that the price of an adequately nutritious weekly food basket increased by 24-26% in the last two years. This has pushed ever-growing numbers of people, many of them in work, to use food banks and other forms of emergency food provision. The United Kingdom is not alone in this scenario, but it is shocking to see in the 6th richest nation in the world, and as other countries have demonstrated, these are not “wicked problems”, rather, they are issues that can be resolved politically and indeed, have at times been successfully addressed in the United Kingdom itself in the last century.

As in many parts of the world, the double burden of malnutrition is also an issue in the United Kingdom, with 63.8% of adults in England estimated to be overweight or living with obesity (UK Office for Health Disparities, 2023). Data shows that Britons eat more unhealthy foods, including Ultra Processed Foods (UPFs) than any other European country (Rauber et al., 2018; Mertens, Colizzi and Peñalvo, 2022; Touvier et al., 2023; Madruga et al., 2023; Mutebi, 2024).

In 2023, reports of a threefold increase in the number of patients admitted to hospital with malnutrition and nutritional deficiencies was linked to the health impacts of food insecurity, with data from the Association of UK Dietitians (BDA) showing over three million people in the United Kingdom are at risk of malnutrition.⁶ This against the backdrop of widespread poverty, with 2024 data showing over two-thirds of parliamentary constituencies in the United Kingdom have a child poverty rate of 25% or more, which means that at least 1 in 4 children is living in poverty (Stone, 2024). The latest poverty statistics show 18% of the population (12 million people) living in absolute poverty in 2022-2023, when inflation was at 10%. Such levels of poverty are akin to those last seen in 2011-2012 after the financial crash (UK Department of Work and Pensions, 2024).

Despite robust data on the links between poverty and food insecurity, there was little discussion of FNS in the United Kingdom's 2024 general election campaign. The manifesto of the victorious Labour Party recognised that “food

6. BDA – The Association of UK Dietitians. Available at: <https://www.bda.uk.com/news-campaigns/campaigns/campaign-topics/malnutrition.html#:~:text=More%20than%20three%20million%20people,care%20and%202%25%20in%20hospital>.

security is national security” and promised to expand school “breakfast clubs”, while committing to half of all food procured across the public sector to be locally produced or certified to higher environmental standards. However, it failed to commit to the universal provision of free school meals for primary schools (for children aged 4-11), despite the strength of the evidence for its vital importance in ensuring adequate childhood nutrition. It also held back from committing to revert the two-child benefit cap, which prevents parents from claiming a combination of tax credits or benefits for more than two children, a policy introduced by the Conservative Government in 2017. Data from the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) shows the two-child limit is pushing 1.1 million children deeper into poverty, and that the “economic and societal effects of child poverty, including spending on public services, costs the UK £39 billion every year” (CPAG, 2023). The End Poverty Coalition stated that it would cost £1.3 billion to do scrap the two-child cap (2023-2024), making it the most cost-effective way to reduce child poverty, as removing it would immediately lift 250,000 children out of poverty (End Child Poverty, 2023).

This macro-level policy gap contrasts with the many innovations which have been developed locally in the United Kingdom over the last two decades to tackle growing FNS challenges at home. These range from highly innovative approaches to tackling food waste, with organisations such as Waste and Action Resources Programme (WRAP) working with government, manufacturers, retailers, charitable organisations and the general public to ensure that surplus food is used to address food security rather than go to landfill, and similar local-level initiatives all over the country. For example, OLIO is a mobile app which was developed in the United Kingdom to enable food-sharing, connecting people to surplus food. They worked with the Greater London Authority and N/LAB to develop Artificial Intelligence tools to build the first ever data-driven food insecurity map for the United Kingdom, with national funding from Innovate United Kingdom (Nica-Avram et al., 2020).

Other innovations include a range of community kitchens and local initiatives which tackle every aspect of food, from farm to fork. Many of these were set up by volunteers keen to contribute to unmet needs in their neighbourhoods, where the combined impacts of multiple financial crises with austerity measures was compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic to exacerbate existing inequalities: the cost-of-living crisis that followed deepened hunger and poverty, entrenching food banks and other local initiatives as a “regular lifeline for many” (Cabral et al., 2024). London Mayor Sadiq Khan, also of the Labour Party, has offered the capital’s primary-school children free school meals from September 2024, showing how cities and municipalities are able to innovate and deliver things which central government will not.

The United Kingdom's reluctance to implement universal provision of free school meals at the national level ignores the evidence from other countries, such as Brazil, which has demonstrated that this is an area where broad political and societal consensus can be forged. Providing universal free school meals is a national food policy with significant positive benefits to children and families, population health, health care provision and the education system, which also generates positive spillovers for the producers, manufacturers and service providers engaged in the provision of school meals.⁷

The use of Brazil as an example of successful national policy in this area is not to ignore the challenges faced by the country in recent years. However, Brazil was able to continue provision of universal free school meals throughout years of political crises, feeding 40 million children via a procurement policy which guarantees that one third of state funding for school meals is spent on produce from local family farms. As one British newspaper editorial, quoting the Sustainable Financing Initiative for School Health and Nutrition (SFI), put it, "No country (...) better illustrates the transformative role of school meals than Brazil" (The Guardian, 2023).

We share this snapshot of the United Kingdom, a high-income G20 member state, and its relatively weaker performance at the national food policy level than Brazil, a middle-income G20 member, to show how poverty, hunger, and related policy challenges are not the preserve of "developing", low- or middle-income countries.

It is worth noting, however, that David Lammy, UK Secretary of State for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office in the new United Kingdom government has stated that it is time to work more closely with the multilateral system, and with countries of the Global South, including Brazil; and that Anneliese Dodds, the Minister for International Development has stated the new government is committed to "rebuild our development reputation in genuine partnership with the Global South to deliver economic growth, climate action, and equality in all we do".⁸ The variety of experiences of countries within the G20 has much to offer in terms of lessons learnt of what political will can achieve, even against the background of straightened fiscal circumstances, and the Global Alliance offers an opportunity to galvanise action on the international as well as national stage of its member states and supporters.

7. The latest evidence on school meals can be found on the FAO website. Available at: <https://www.fao.org/platforms/school-food/technical-resources/latest-evidence/latest-evidence-on-impacts-and-implementation-of-school-meal-programmes/en>.

8. Available at: <https://x.com/AnnelieseDodds/status/1810417097333219667>. Accessed on: July 12, 2024.

1.3 Brazil: leader in the global sharing of home-grown FNS policies

By contrast with high-income countries like the United Kingdom, the conjoined issue of hunger and poverty has long been recognised as a major domestic policy challenge in middle-income countries (Abdenur, 2016), including in the fast-growing economies which since the 2000s have been slowly but steadily graduating from traditional aid, and are themselves acting as important development cooperation partners elsewhere. Countries across Latin America, Africa and Asia have led on these efforts, drawing on their own domestic experiences of addressing hunger and poverty as part of the wave of Southern-led development cooperation that re-emerged in the early 2000s to develop innovative and effective social policies, strengthening capacities by bringing new ideas, practices, and modes of delivery to the table.

Brazil has played a key role in this movement, drawing on its success in tackling hunger at home to achieve global leadership in Food and Nutritional Security (Oliveira and Lima, 2023). Brazil-grown policies and programmes inspiring these exchanges include public food procurement from smallholder farmers (Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos – PAA), the universal National School Feeding Programme (Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar – PNAE) and conditional cash-transfer programmes and targeting instruments like the Family Grant Programme (Programa Bolsa Família – PBF) and the Single Registry (Cadastro Único – CadÚnico). Many of these programmes are part of Brazil's National Policy for Food and Nutrition (Política Nacional de Alimentação e Nutrição – PNAN), which sits under the Unified Social Assistance System (Sistema Único de Assistência Social – Suas) and integrates all of the Brazilian state's work on FNS into a single policy edifice, underpinned by constitutional provision for the right to food (Lei Orgânica de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional – Losan).

Crucially, Brazil's highly effective food and nutritional security apparatus is also underpinned by a strongly intersectoral and participatory governance structure. The latter spans an Inter-Ministerial Food and Nutritional Security Committee (Câmara Interministerial de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional – Caisan), which together with the Councils for Food and Nutritional Security (Conselhos de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional – Consea) draws on the deliberations of the National Food and Nutritional Security Conference to produce the National Food and Nutritional Security Plan (Política Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional – PNSAN), the main instrument for planning, managing and implementing actions to ensure food and nutritional security (Santarelli, Vieira and Constantine, 2018). There is also a robust monitoring and evaluation system for FNS action which feeds into other government social assistance programmes. The nation-wide network of Conseas is a crucial element of the structure: Conseas exist at every level of governance from municipal to

federal, feeding into the design of policies, and thus bringing crucial data on what works based on lived experience, as well as working to monitor and enhance policy implementation at all levels, from local to national, including in Brazil's foreign policy engagements (Lima, Waisbich and Serafim, 2022). While this structure is also dependent on political will, and Consea has on two occasions been dismantled by an incoming government, the structure is so large and – crucially – decentralised, that it continues to function on many different levels within the country, as was seen during the government of former president Jair Bolsonaro, when city and municipal Conseas continued to work (Bezerra et al., 2022).

Decades of experimentation in fighting poverty and hunger at home, coupled with efforts to translate its own experiences – including learning from what did not work, as well as the successes – to different international audiences, including through development cooperation, have therefore ensured that Brazil is well-placed to champion development cooperation and mutual learning in food and nutritional security within the G20 and beyond through the launch of the Global Alliance Against hunger and poverty. In the next section, we outline a set of lessons from Brazil's domestic experience on which the Alliance can draw, which may be relevant to middle- and high-income countries in the G20 as well as to the low- and middle-income African countries that are now engaging with the grouping via the inclusion of the African Union.

We go on to examine in greater depth a set of lessons around the importance of involving actors from the local as well as the national level, and from civil society as well as government and the corporate sector, with reference to two specific examples. In the first example, we explore the role of inclusive governance and multi-stakeholder partnerships, focusing on Brazil's experience with the Consea system. In the second, we explore a set of approaches centred on bottom-up innovation and city-to-city exchange that may have particular potential for South-North mutual learning, focusing on a project which brought together academic, government and civil society actors from three cities in different G20 countries (Brazil, Canada and the United Kingdom) to exchange experience of effective strategies to reducing racialised inequities in access to healthy food since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the concluding section, we draw on these examples to highlight the potential for middle- and high-income countries in the G20 to learn from each other in the context of the new Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty and beyond.

1.4 Increasing effectiveness through decentralised and participatory governance structures

Brazil left the FAO Hunger Map in 2014 but returned to it not long after, based on data from the 2017-2018 Consumer Expenditure Survey (Pesquisa de Orçamento Familiar – POF) (IBGE, 2020; Rede PENSSAN, 2020).

The POF showed that severe food insecurity affected 5% of the population, equivalent to over 10 million people; this was higher than the 2013 figure of 3.6% of the population. According to the most recent official statistics, in 2023 4.1% of the population (8.7 million people) faced severe food and nutritional insecurity.⁹ Despite the persistent challenges and the most recent setbacks, resulting from a prolonged political and economic instability since the mid-2010s and the shock produced by the Covid-19 pandemic, Brazil's social policy instruments have delivered remarkable achievements in tackling poverty and hunger, while generating a strong evidence base on what works.

It is widely recognised that both specific food security-related instruments (including school feeding or food acquisition programmes like PNAE and PAA) and broader social protection ones (including conditional cash transfers like Bolsa Família and non-contributory pension schemes like Benefício de Prestação Continuada – BPC) played an important role in addressing food and nutritional insecurity in the country. Three important lessons from Brazil's experience are of particular value to other countries.

- 1) Political leadership: ensure strong political leadership to make FNS a national priority, backed by legislation to secure continuity of state-financed provision.
- 2) Intersectorality: embed FNS in all policies via a multi-level intersectoral systems approach, underpinned by legal and institutional frameworks.
- 3) Decentralisation and participation: establish decentralised and participatory governance structures including national, sub-national and national level institutions like Brazil's Councils for Food and Nutritional Security (Conseas) to ensure accountability and delivery while responding to place-specific challenges.

Here we focus on the third lesson, related to decentralised and participatory governance, which has received relatively little attention, despite its relevance to the Global Alliance. When Brazil's National Council for Food and Nutritional Security, Consea, was re-established by the first Workers' Party government under President Lula in 2003, it formed the centrepiece of a system of legally binding participatory governance arrangements designed to guide state-society dialogue throughout the policy cycle, including on measures to tackle the structural drivers of food and nutritional insecurity. In addition to the national Council, Conseas exist at the municipal and state levels in Brazil, which helps to ensure both that national policy is informed by citizen engagement and that subnational programmes are responsive to place-based needs.

9. Figures released in April 2024 by the Brazilian national statistics agency, IBGE. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/secom/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2024/04/no-primeiro-ano-de-governo-24-4-milhoes-deixam-de-passar-fome-no-brasil>.

Promoting food sovereignty and FNS at the international level is a key component of Brazil's FNS policy and this has led Consea to also act internationally on multiple fronts, helping to foster FNS policy networks at regional and international levels and bolster the role of participatory governance in FNS policy debates, with the overarching aim of supporting the realisation of the human right to adequate food (Santarelli and Pomeroy, 2017). Brazil drew heavily on Consea's experience and its participatory model to influence the reform of the UN Committee for Food Security in 2009, which is unique within the UN system for including the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism for relations with the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).

Consea has also provided an important space for scrutiny by Brazil's domestic FNS policy and advocacy community of the export of the country's FNS policies and "social technologies" through international cooperation activities (Lima, Waisbich and Serafim, 2022). This contributed to the adaptation and scaling up of a national rights-based policy to guide multilateral action and foster cooperation, notably through trilateral cooperation schemes.

Thus, through its international engagement, Consea has been able to advocate for policy coherence and cohesion between what is done domestically and what is exported by Brazil. Consea's role in shaping both Brazilian FNS policies at home as well as Brazil's modest but growing development cooperation portfolio contrasts sharply with the separation in countries such as the United Kingdom between the policy communities concerned with domestic food systems and poverty issues, and those concerned with international development cooperation.

However, while Brazilian South-South Cooperation (SSC) has "mutual benefits" as a core principle, the operationalisation of mutual learning practices and outcomes has been less easy to achieve. Consea's international role has not thus far made a significant contribution to Brazil adopting policy innovations and social technologies that originate elsewhere in the world, whether via South-South or North-South mutual learning. One factor has been the disconnect between the focus on government-to-government exchange of national policies and programmes in Brazil's development cooperation efforts, and the flourishing mutual learning networks that connect subnational governments, academic institutions and civil society groups internationally (Constantine and Shankland, 2017). In the next section, we briefly review the evidence on the potential role played by decentralised networks of city-to-city exchange before examining the lessons from a specific decentralised mutual learning project on tackling racial inequities in food and nutritional security which has promoted exchange between Brazil and two high-income G20 member countries, Canada and the United Kingdom.

1.5 Bottom-up innovation and city-to-city learning

This dynamic was evident in the way that many Brazilian municipalities adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The creation of the MDGs in 2000 meant domestic development gains were given greater prominence internationally; and served as a carrot and stick approach at the local and state level in Brazil itself, creating local-level ownership for MDG-related development initiatives (UN, 2016).

City-to-city learning provides a rich seam of evidence on what works at the municipal level, spanning research and development and more importantly, implementation. Local authorities are often driven to innovate both despite and because of their relationship with central government, as seen in the United Kingdom example above, where the Mayor of London was able to deliver on free school meals for all primary school children, in sharp contrast to national policy on this. There are many examples of highly original, creative and successful policies tackling poverty, and food and nutrition insecurity at the local level globally, often in hyper-localised contexts. The latter might spark interest while attracting criticism for its place-based specificity which is seen to hinder replicating and/or scaling up. However, research shows that it is precisely such place-based initiatives that are more likely to succeed, given actors' deep understanding and knowledge of the context. There is ample evidence that successful "hyper-local" initiatives can be replicated, provided care is taken to avoid a "one size fits all" approach, as discussed further below.

The "Solidarity Kitchens" developed by the Brazilian Homeless Workers' Movement (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem-Teto) was recently incorporated into national FNS policy, guaranteeing resources for what started out as local community action by a social movement which saw the kitchens as an important space for democratic resistance (Domingues, Colombo and Bruno, 2024). "The MTST's thinking is that each lunchbox distributed carries with it an act of resistance and the assertion that hunger cannot be normalised" (idem, ibidem), showing the powerful role decentralised networks – such as that of a social movement – can have in bringing lived experience to bear in formal policy spaces. The pandemic is of particular interest as a loci of such action, given that in some contexts the state was absent (as in the urban periphery of many Brazilian cities), and in others, such as in municipalities in England, local government was able to cut through red tape to work with civil society to deliver fast-paced and often innovative policy solutions which would not have flourished during "business as usual".

One such subnational/non-governmental mutual learning network is the Trans-Atlantic Partnership-funded “Building Back Better from Below” (B4) project,¹⁰ which connects three cities: São Paulo (Brazil), Toronto (Canada) and Brighton and Hove (United Kingdom). The project took a place-based approach which included both city-wide initiatives and projects focusing on specific neighbourhoods, including Campo Limpo, Bom Retiro, and São Remo in São Paulo and Scarborough in Toronto. The project took activists, project leaders and front-line service providers from each of the cities to visit grassroots innovations in the other cities, with the MTST coordinator responsible for the Solidarity Kitchens in São Paulo joining the project’s final conference in Brighton in June 2024, alongside a food rights and anti-racism campaigner from Campo Limpo and the director of a Black-led health and food service provider in Scarborough.

In the United Kingdom they engaged with the municipal public health team in the City of Brighton and Hove, and the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership, a not-for-profit organisation which works closely with the municipal authority on food matters in the city, acting as an umbrella organisation for local organisations and liaising with local and national government on policy, as well as promoting the city’s experiences in order to inform the development of other food partnerships and localised food policies. They met with various community leaders from local organisations working on food, nutrition and sustainable agriculture; health; race and equity; refugee and migrant support; community development. These were rich and powerful interactions, where space was created for very practical mutual learning between actors tackling similar issues across different national, cultural and political contexts.

This project highlights the potential of decentralised South-North learning to support the scale-up of local innovations in the global effort to reduce food insecurity and inequities in access to health and food. The project seeks to catalyse more systematic documentation of and lesson-learning from the innovative responses to inequities in access to primary health care and to healthy food that were highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic, to support a sustained and scaled-up response to these inequities. The project has shown how collaborative decision-making during the pandemic – between civil society organisations, local government, the public health system and volunteers – created powerfully simple yet innovative responses which helped to address deeply entrenched inequalities and enabled so-called “hard to reach” populations to access healthy food in diverse cities with high levels of social and economic inequality. The evidence generated demonstrates the importance of enabling local innovations which can be scaled

10. Available at: <https://www.ids.ac.uk/projects/building-back-better-from-belowb4-harnessing-innovations-in-community-response-and-intersectoral-collaboration-for-health-and-food-justice-beyond-the-covid-19-pandemic/>.

up effectively – which has historically been one of the strengths of Brazilian social policy, whose national programmes such as Bolsa Família often consolidated a series of sub-national innovations.

The Covid-19 pandemic shone a light on the various intersections of inequalities in areas such as health, income, nutrition, gender, race, age and geography – but despite producing very different impacts both within and between countries, it was also a universal experience. This has provided a new impetus for mutual learning between communities and cities across the world. Here, there is significant potential to build on established city-to-city networks such as United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), C40 and Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) to develop mutual learning exchanges that transcend the geographies of “Global North” and “Global South”. Indeed, MUFPP, promoting local solutions for global issues, as per its strapline, has already enabled a number of cities in the United Kingdom to engage in mutual learning on food and nutrition-related issues with other MUFPP members, including in Brazil and Canada.

Both Consea and the Trans-Atlantic Partnership “Building Back Better from Below” project show the vitally important role communities and government have in working together to develop a shared understanding of how to create more equitable food systems (Ranta and Cabral, 2023). This is key in the current context, where Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are considered to have gone “off-track” and existing ODA and SSC flows have failed to address this issue with the priority it requires. What is more, Brazil’s own trajectory of returning to the FAO Hunger Map in under a decade is a telling account of how vital political will is to sustain poverty and hunger alleviation gains across time – and of the importance of sustaining commitment and innovation at subnational levels and within civil society when national-level support fluctuates in a highly polarised political context.

2 MECHANISMS FOR SCALING UP LEARNING FROM HYPER-LOCAL INNOVATIONS

As discussed above, the B4 project, connecting three cities in Brazil, Canada and the United Kingdom, shows the power of networks in supporting and enabling learning. It demonstrated how collaborative decision-making during the pandemic – between civil society, local government, the public health system and volunteers – created simple yet innovative responses which helped address deeply entrenched inequalities, enabling so-called “hard to reach” populations to access healthy food in diverse cities with high levels of socio-economic inequality. The evidence demonstrated the importance of enabling local innovations that can be scaled-up effectively.

Linked to this, and equally relevant to the Alliance, is Brazil's three-pronged approach to development cooperation, based on *knowledge creation, capacity development, and policy dialogue*. This includes systematising and institutionalising the evidence base on successful policies through research, evaluation and policy learning, aimed at both domestic and international audiences.

Initially, Brazil focused on relations within Latin America, having long worked closely with (Mercado Comum do Sul – Mercosul) and regional UN agencies on FNS and wider social protection initiatives, such as the FAO-linked Latin American and Caribbean Sustainable School Meals Network and the Iberian-Latin American Network of Human Milk Banks. Alongside this regional cooperation, Brazil works through parliamentary groups dedicated to engaging at the sub-national, national and international level with counterparts working on similar themes. This helps embed knowledge into political as well as technical processes and institutions, creating networks of allies in Congress.

As Brazil's role as a development cooperation actor grew, including through new cooperation architectures such as IBSA and BRICS, it set up new institutions to support these efforts. Thus, Brazil's global hunger and poverty response ecosystem is anchored in a set of key national institutions (Leite et al., 2015) and international partnerships with multilateral and bilateral aid agencies and foundations. Central to this are knowledge and policy learning hubs such as the former Brazil United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) International Policy Centre on Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) and the Brazil-WFP Centre of Excellence Against Hunger (WFP CoE) which occupy a central place in this ecosystem (Waisbich and Haug, 2022). These institutions have hosted policy learning and dissemination hubs, communities of practice, and repositories.

Despite the ebbs and flows in Brazilian development cooperation in the past decade (Waisbich, Luiz and Faria, 2022), they continued to provide an important resource for enabling the systematisation and institutionalisation of knowledge on content, methods, and the broader political economy of international development cooperation. Lessons learned by institutions and experts within this ecosystem can provide a robust foundation for the proposed Alliance's work, as outlined below.

3 THE CASE FOR A NEW ALLIANCE AGAINST HUNGER AND POVERTY AND THE ROLE OF THE G20

The significant, long-lasting negative impacts of the pandemic on poverty, inequality and hunger are a stark reminder of the pressing need for international commitment in these times of poly-crises and instability. Concerted, high-level multilateral action is urgently needed to tackle these global problems, building

on the consensus established by the SDGs. Examples of effective policies and programmes tackling hunger and poverty already exist, as do fora and mechanisms for mutual learning and multilateral policy coordination. Over the last twenty years, development cooperation (in particular South-South and Triangular Cooperation) enabled many countries in the Global South, including other Southern G20 members besides Brazil, to share their knowledge and experience in tackling poverty and hunger through innovative and effective social policies.

Building on the G20's long history of working to address food and nutritional insecurity, including the G20 Bali Declaration (2022) and the commitment to the G20 Deccan High-Level Principles on Food Security and Nutrition (2023), the proposed Alliance is well placed to draw on G20 support to give new impetus to Zero Hunger ahead of the fast-approaching 2030 deadline.

Under the Brazilian presidency, the G20 conceived the international Alliance Against Poverty and Hunger to “(a) provide sustained political drive and galvanize collective action, building synergies with other existing efforts to combat hunger and poverty; and (b) facilitate mobilization and improved alignment of domestic and international support, including public and private financial resources and knowledge, to enable large-scale country-owned and country-led implementation of evidence-based programs and policy instruments, focusing on countries most affected by hunger and extreme poverty and persons in vulnerable situations” (G20, 2024). A G20-backed Alliance can provide leadership, supporting countries across the world, within and beyond the grouping, to reaffirm their commitment to this issue by putting hunger back onto the global agenda, integrating lessons from the pandemic and evidence on healthy, sustainable and equitable food system transitions. Such high-level commitment is needed in times of multiple global crises and renewed forms of instability. Ensuring strong engagement between the multilateral system, national and subnational governments is key to make better use of existing fragmented funding and technical expertise and avoid loss of institutional memory, while harnessing lessons learnt to build back better. The G20 can be a powerful ally for galvanising efforts to make this initiative a political priority at the multilateral level, transforming it into an effective vehicle for collective action on hunger and poverty.

For such an Alliance to work as a catalyst for international action and a driver of change across G20 members and other countries, it needs to effectively mobilise adequate financing, knowledge sharing between countries, and a commitment to adopt effective responses to tackle poverty and hunger nationally. Development cooperation, including North-South, South-South and Trilateral, is one proven way in which developed and developing countries can work together, and if taken forward under the umbrella of the Alliance, it could help close the gap

which often exists between domestic and foreign policy on poverty and hunger. The G20 is well-placed to work with the UN to facilitate mutual learning through development cooperation, mitigating the risk of duplication of efforts.

In order to succeed, those engaged in building the Alliance need to pay closer attention to cooperation dynamics, drawing on existing evidence on the conditions under which international cooperation initiatives, North-South, South-South and Trilateral, work best. To build initiatives that enable and enact coordination, cooperation and mutual learning, a key aspect here is for the G20-backed Alliance to work multilaterally through existing funding schemes and mechanisms such as the CFS, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC's) South-South Galaxy, The Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc) Partnership Forum and the United Nations (UN), Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), SDG Academy, the World Bank International Development Association, among many others.

A way to bolster global and country-level efforts to translate this experience into opportunities for wider learning and implementation is to engage existing knowledge, policy and funding networks to co-construct a shared strategy, using their platforms for outreach and engagement to accelerate learning through existing channels. This would help give greater visibility to tried and tested local innovations with global relevance, fostering mutual learning and supporting knowledge transfer which helps countries strengthen national policies aligned to SDG implementation plans.

This would require modest additional financial support while delivering a valuable process and resources to policy actors across states, civil society and academia. G20 support to the new Alliance and this mutual learning engagement strategy would show that G20 countries are ready to lead by example. Drawing on lessons learnt from Brazil's development cooperation, the Alliance can catalyse resourcing and connection building within the existing development cooperation ecosystem.

To date, Brazil's joint ventures have overwhelmingly targeted hunger and poverty within the Global South, leaving untapped potential for mutual learning exchanges to include South-North sharing of strategies and policies. Brazilian cooperation institutions have also focused on the export and adaptation of Brazilian innovations rather than on mutual learning for its own benefit. This is a missed opportunity for deeper iterative learning drawing on the circulation of policy innovations. This also applies to countries such as the United Kingdom, where domestic social policy does not formally intersect with international development cooperation, despite the potential for learning and innovation across both contexts.

G20 members who are traditional development partners could offer a vital source of funding and programming support for scaling up initiatives, strengthening delivery mechanisms and supporting monitoring and evaluation to embed evidence-based learning. At the same time, this refresh of the existing institutional infrastructure for cooperation initiatives would ensure that all G20 members could benefit from a reinvigorated approach to multidirectional policy learning.

In what follows, we unpack the main added value of the new G20-backed Alliance, focusing on its potential to serve as a catalyser for knowledge exchange and policy dialogue to foster a new generation of effective national policies to tackle poverty and hunger across the world.

4 ON KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE: FRAMING THE POLICY CHALLENGE

The creation of the Alliance provides a crucial opportunity to re-frame food insecurity as a universal political problem, underpinned by intersecting poverty and inequality, which we can resolve. This framing of food insecurity also underlines the importance of rethinking the rights and responsibilities within national and global food systems. As discussed before, food and nutritional insecurity are prevalent across the world. Inequitable food systems create barriers for accessing healthy food with significant repercussions for people's health and wellbeing, which in turn impacts on the state health and welfare system. Just access to healthy food for all requires state-led reform of the food system, with greater engagement and regulation of the corporate actors who control the bulk of the food economy. The pandemic demonstrated that state intervention can be extremely effective in providing a safety net for the most vulnerable and to the growing number of citizens who experience precarity.

A G20-backed Alliance could be a vehicle for progress towards recognising the universality of these issues, moving away from the usual North-South dichotomies that have long shaped development cooperation, in which rich(er) countries have often been recognised as the sole actors to have authority, capacity and legitimacy to share. The most recent data shows and calls for a broad international recognition of poverty, hunger and all forms of malnutrition as challenges in and to low-income and in middle- and high-income member countries of the G20. Such recognition also calls for acknowledging that food inequities and growing levels of malnutrition are political issues which can be resolved, and that relevant experience of acting on these can be shared across very different contexts.

5 ON KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE: EMBRACING DIVERSE POLICY SOLUTIONS AND LEARNING FROM FAILURE

While designing its “Knowledge Repository” (or the “Policy Basket”) with examples of “successful” policies and experiences, the Alliance Secretariat must avoid one-size-fits-all recommendations and instead work with a diverse set of policy solutions. This means making available to partner countries and their policy communities a broader set of policy instruments and governance arrangements, going beyond national policies and programmes to include civil society-led innovations and subnational experiences.

The Alliance should also focus on lessons learned. Working with, and learning from, “failures” is as important as learning from “successful” cases. If the Alliance seeks to inspire and technically assist countries in devising the new generation of effective policy solutions to these complex problems, it should also recognise that learning must come from genuine exchange, including candid conversations about when, how and why things go wrong.

6 ON POLICY DIALOGUE: MULTIDIRECTIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND MUTUAL LEARNING

Recognising there are already multiple forms of international cooperation addressing food insecurity (North-South, South-South, Regional and Trilateral Cooperation), the Alliance will need to be a vehicle for innovative thinking and new connections and synergies between existing initiatives. There are mechanisms for cooperation and exchange, for example between the Rome-based food agencies, among countries of the OECD or through the UN Office for South-South Cooperation, but more work is needed on connecting them, and disseminating innovations by subnational state and non-state actors. There are also a range of bilateral, multilateral, and non-governmental funding schemes already targeting poverty and hunger. The funding landscape is currently highly dispersed and fragmented but can be more strategically be mobilised for and through the Alliance.

In addition to symbolising a renewed global commitment to fighting hunger and poverty in times of global turbulence, the Alliance should use its political clout to establish concrete mechanisms that foster development cooperation and mutual learning across its member countries. To do so, in addition to a “Knowledge Repository” (or “Policy Basket”) of good practices the Alliance should develop a mechanism which serves as a “matchmaking” service. This can draw on existing examples of “drawdown intelligence services” used by government agencies, and the “honest broker” services offered by research institutes, civil society organisations, and existing global policy centres within and beyond the UN system.

Equally important, the Alliance should openly encourage participation based on a commitment to share and learn. This can be done through a sign-up agreement that explicitly asks prospective members:

- what types of issues they envisage requiring assistance with;
- what policy solutions they can offer as a basis for exchange and learning;
- what they would like to learn;
- whether they can contribute with financial resources to enable such exchanges.

Further developing a pledging or marketplace-style mechanism to support exchanges would ensure that exchanges are based on need, alongside a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) component to ensure ongoing learning and the iterative capacity development of the Alliance. Finally, the Alliance could work with the UN Global Compact or other similar multistakeholder initiatives to benefit from corporate actors willing to support such efforts. A similar model could also be used for universities and their federations.

7 ON POLICY DIALOGUE: REINVIGORATING EXISTING MULTILATERAL MECHANISMS

To succeed, the Alliance must pay attention to international cooperation dynamics, drawing on existing evidence on the conditions under which multidirectional cooperation initiatives work best. To build initiatives that enable and enact coordination, cooperation and mutual learning, a key aspect is for the G20-backed Alliance to work multilaterally through existing mechanisms such as the CFS and UNOSSC's South-South Galaxy, among others. A way to bolster global and country-level efforts to translate this experience into opportunities for wider learning and implementation is to engage existing knowledge and policy networks to co-construct a shared strategy, using their platforms for outreach and engagement thus accelerating learning through existing channels. This would give visibility to tried and tested national and hyper-local innovations with global relevance, fostering mutual learning and supporting knowledge transfer to strengthen SDG-aligned national policies. Such alignment requires modest financial support while delivering a valuable process and resources to policy actors across states, civil society and academia.

Finally, it is vital that the proposed Global Alliance avoids duplicating, competing with or undermining existing multilateral initiatives as it is being forged at a moment when the multilateral system itself is at risk of fragmentation. In order to succeed, the Alliance should throw the G20's weight behind existing initiatives and internationally agreed guidelines for helping countries to deliver on

these commitments, while laying the foundations for future agreements and for a new generation of evidence-based national policies to fight hunger and poverty. These should reflect the lessons learned on the importance of cross-sectoral approaches, participatory governance, locally led innovation and multidirectional mutual learning for effective responses to the injustices that allow hunger and poverty to persist in the Global South and North alike.

8 ON THE G20 ROLE

Once the Alliance is formally launched, the G20 will have a continued role to ensure it is receiving the necessary political attention from world leaders and building the necessary bridges with the broader multilateral system. G20 members should also commit to the principle of mutual learning and universality, setting the example for a participation based on countries' clear offer and/or demand for "solutions", regardless of their income or development status. The G20 should also commit to an initial contribution of seed-funding for learning initiatives among G20 Alliance members, and initiatives between G20 Alliance members and other non-G20 Alliance members.

9 CONCLUSION

In June 2024, the Brazilian interministerial Task Force leading on designing and refining the Alliance finalised its proposal to be shared with its G20 counterparts in the coming months. Also in June, the T20 issued its communiqué featuring policy recommendations for the Brazilian G20 Presidency. The Communiqué emphasised the role of the Alliance in, among other things, strengthening multilateral cooperation and bridging multiple streams of global concerted action, including the fight to end poverty and hunger, the promotion of just transitions and adaptation, the reduction of inequalities, and securing the right to food and the right to social protection. The Communiqué also reiterated that "Successful policy instruments that have been implemented in the Global South to build and scale up both sustainable food systems and comprehensive adaptive social protection systems can be shared and adapted through trilateral, South-South, North-South and even South-North cooperation with the support of the Global Alliance".¹¹

As the negotiations around the Alliance progress, countries and experts involved should make sure this new initiative will deliver on strengthened channels for development cooperation and mutual learning to fight poverty and hunger. In this conclusion we highlight four underlying principles that should guide the future work around the Alliance.

11. Available at: <https://t20brasil.org/en/communique>.

First, a strong commitment to mutual learning to address the universal challenge of poverty and hunger, irrespective of countries' income status. In 2015, UN members agreed on the Agenda 2030 and committed to treating development issues as integrated, intersectional and universal, within the framework of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities. By adopting a universal and mutual learning approach towards fighting hunger and poverty, the Alliance will be fostering policy learning across all members, regardless of their current economic development status, in the spirit of the hard-fought consensus achieved by the SDGs.

Second, an emphasis on enabling mutual learning through and beyond development cooperation to empower reforms within and across countries. By creating development cooperation and mutual learning mechanisms (like initial adhesion terms, survey of needs and offers, and a matchmaking platform), the Alliance will be better prepared to engender change on the ground, avoiding policy incoherence. In international cooperation there are often gaps between domestic and foreign policy, with high(er) income countries committing to tackling issues abroad while taking little action domestically. The Alliance should demonstrate how multidirectional mutual learning can and should inform food security actions targeting more vulnerable groups in all countries, regardless of per capita income level. This process should harness existing networks, linking state and non-state actors within countries; and researchers, citizen groups and subnational governments across countries, rather than remaining confined to state-to-state exchanges.

Third, a focus on catalysing global action without undermining existing multilateral structures. By supporting the new Alliance, the G20 will reiterate its political commitment to fight hunger globally. The symbolism of this commitment is important, but the Alliance should avoid becoming "G20-centred". Only by creating synergies and reinforcing existing inclusive multilateral initiatives (within the UN system, at the regional level, and beyond) and can the Alliance fulfil its mission to serve as a catalyser for change and effective multilateral action.

Finally, the Alliance should aim to strengthen existing multilateral initiatives, particularly those led by the UN. New high-profile initiatives (including those championed by the G20) often aim to catalyse political momentum for global action, but risk duplicating, competing with or even undermining existing efforts. It is particularly important for this G20-backed Global Alliance to avoid this as it is being forged at a moment when the multilateral system itself is at risk. The Global Alliance will therefore need a very clear strategy for ensuring that it reinforces the existing international commitments to the fight against poverty and hunger (as expressed in the SDGs, among other declarations). It should throw the G20's weight behind the existing multilateral initiatives and internationally

agreed guidelines for helping countries to deliver on these commitments, while at the same time laying the foundations for future agreements that can reflect the lessons learned since the Covid-19 pandemic on the importance of cross-sectoral approaches, participatory governance, locally-led innovation and multidirectional mutual learning for effective responses to the intersecting injustices that allow hunger and poverty to persist in the Global South and North alike.

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