



World Food Programme



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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Joint News Release

On World Food Day, FAO, IFAD, WFP and the World Bank renew their commitment on pioneering research to support food security in Iraq

16 October 2020, Baghdad - Today on World Food Day, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Bank renewed their commitment to continue their pioneering research on food security in Iraq and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the most vulnerable.

Each year, over 150 countries around the world hold events to mark World Food Day, making it one of the most celebrated international days. But this year's World Food Day is no ordinary day; it comes as the world continues to fight the coronavirus - a global scourge that has exposed the fragility of our food systems, threatens to push millions more into hunger, and has rekindled our appreciation for food security.

The socio-economic effects of the pandemic – particularly loss of incomes – are heightening existing threats linked to conflict and climate change. The need for concerted action to improve agricultural production while enhancing food supply chains is captured in this year's World Food Day theme: "Grow, Nourish, Sustain. Together."

The UN agencies and World Bank's latest bimonthly report highlights how digital innovation can strengthen Iraq's food system. As well as providing a thorough analysis of the food security situation, the report reviews the current status of Iraq's digital ecosystem, identifying innovations that have been successfully introduced in Iraq and beyond, along the agriculture and food value chains.

"This crisis could be leveraged as a catalyst for reform. By diversifying import sources, investing in a food security early warning system and restructuring social protection policy, Iraq's food system can be strengthened," said FAO Representative in Iraq Dr Salah El Hagg Hassan, IFAD Representative for Iraq Tarek Ahmed, WFP Iraq Representative Abdirahman Meygag, and Ramzi Neman, World

Bank Representative in Iraq, in a joint statement. “Digital transformation can underpin these initiatives, improving the resilience of Iraq’s agriculture and food system against current and future shocks.”

The latest monitoring results indicate that 3.8 million people in Iraq (10 percent of the population) have insufficient food. Meanwhile, COVID-19 cases continue to rise. The partners’ data and analysis on food security have been helping inform the government, humanitarian and development community since April, towards stronger food systems supporting vulnerable families, farmers, and endangered small and medium sized businesses in the food and agriculture sector. Following evidence-based planning and decision making, dynamic food systems can contribute both to community-based agricultural growth and the strengthening of national economies.

The partners will publish the next bimonthly report at the end of November, on their latest findings. Download copies of the latest reports at:

<https://bit.ly/3IAKClv>

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