Operationalising the EAT–*Lancet* Commissions' targets to achieve healthy and sustainable diets

In 1948, the UN declared adequate access to food, alongside suitable housing and medical care, to be a basic human right.[1] However, around 1 billion people still have insufficient access to food, while many more consume low quality diets that contribute towards the development of dietary-related illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease.[2] In parallel to the human health crisis, the global food system is a primary driver of biodiversity loss[3] and leading cause of the climate and nature crises, with a third of greenhouse gas emissions derived from food production.[4]

Although the EAT–*Lancet* Commission has outlined global targets on achieving healthy diets produced in sustainable ways,[2] there is no consensus on how governments can operationalise these targets while ensuring social equity, fair politics, and viable economies for those producing and consuming food.[5] In light of this operational gap, in April, 2021, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) published a report entitled Building a Food System that works for Everyone,[6] that outlined areas of immediate action for a healthy and sustainable food system for the UK (figure). The IPPR report, which adopts a whole food systems approach,[7] was informed by an extensive evidence review and a series of expert interviews and forms part of the work of a cross-party commission of politicians, experts, academics, business people, and trade unionists. The IPPR report has five aims.

First, the right to food must be enshrined in law, with independent, statutory bodies established with the function of monitoring, advising, and holding governments to account on their delivery of sustainable

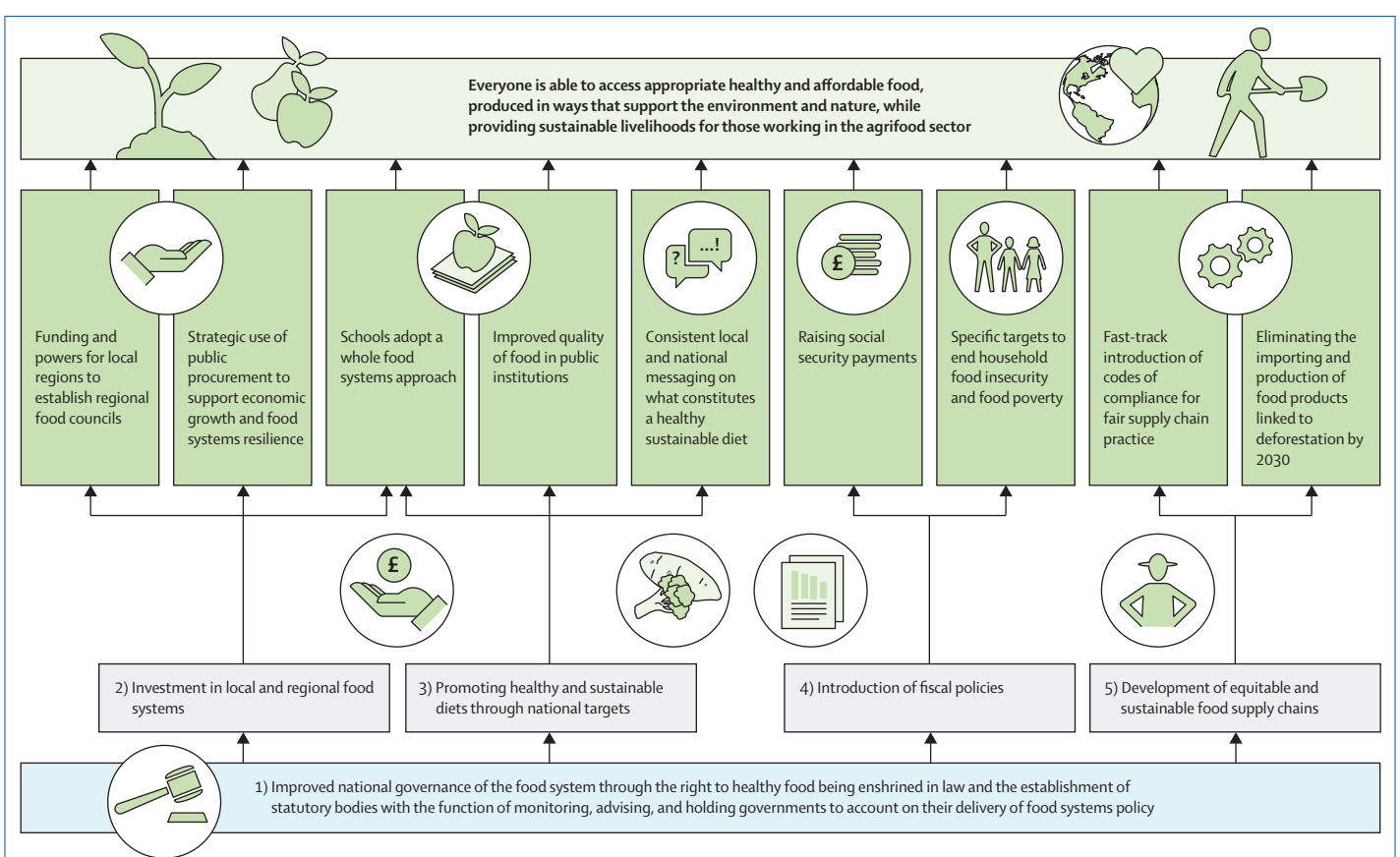


Figure: **Five areas of immediate action that are required to ensure everyone can access appropriate food produced in sustainable ways**
Figure reproduced from reference 6, by permission of Coleman and colleagues.

See Online for appendix

food systems policy. Second, local regions should be supported in developing regional food councils, bringing together stakeholders from diverse food-related sectors to respond to emerging food issues. The development of regional food councils should be informed by global examples that have been effective in improving food systems policy and practice.[8] Third, nationally agreed targets should be introduced to increase the uptake of sustainably and ethically produced meat and intake of plant-based options, by adopting the Eating Better target of a 50% reduction in meat and dairy consumption by 2030.[9] An emphasis should be placed on improving the quality of food in public institutions, because this is where local and national government have greatest influence. Fourth, all members of society must have the financial means to access a regular source of healthy food. Achieving this goal will involve raising baseline social security payments, introducing specific targets to end household food insecurity, and providing all children with access to free school meals. An emphasis must be placed on eliminating childhood hunger given the lasting effects of poor nutrition on child health.[10] Fifth, the establishment of fair and sustainable food supply chains must be supported by fast-tracking the implementation of environmentally friendly codes of compliance that support food companies and supermarkets in reporting the environmental impact of their supply chains. Recognising the global nature of the food system, the importing of food linked to deforestation should be eliminated by 2030.

It is through applying these recommendations, which consider the social, economic, and environmental components of the food system (appendix), that initial steps can be taken towards achieving a vibrant, healthy, and equitable food system for all. Although the specific focus of the IPPR report was the UK food system, these recommendations are applicable to countries globally.

All authors are authors of the Institute for Public Policy Research report titled Building a Food System that works for Everyone.

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