

# Hunger and Nutrition Commitment Index – Donor Index

## Research Summary

### What is HANCI?

The second phase of the Hunger And Nutrition Commitment Index (HANCI) scrutinises donor government commitment to reducing hunger and undernutrition in developing countries.

The HANCI Donor Index has been created to:

- 1) Rank donor governments on their political commitment to tackling hunger and undernutrition in developing countries;
- 2) Measure what donors achieve and where they fail in addressing hunger and undernutrition – providing greater transparency and public accountability;
- 3) Praise donor governments where due, and highlight areas for improvement;
- 4) Support civil society to reinforce and stimulate additional commitment towards reducing hunger and undernutrition;
- 5) Assess whether improving donor commitment levels lead to a reduction in hunger and undernutrition.

### Why measure political commitment to reduce hunger and undernutrition?

- **Globally, levels of hunger and undernutrition remain unacceptably high.**

Hunger and undernutrition are amongst the most persistent global development challenges. At the global level, insufficient progress has been made towards achieving Millennium Development Goal 1. Global numbers of undernourished people have been static at 870 million for the past 5 years and the prevalence of stunting has remained high in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa at around 40% (FAO 2012). One in eight people do not get enough food to be healthy and lead an active life. Undernutrition contributes to 2.6 million deaths of children under five each year - one third of the global total.

- **Progress towards reducing hunger and undernutrition has been highly variable.**

Many developing countries have benefited from substantial economic growth during the last two decades. For growth to have maximum impact, the poor must benefit from the growth process, enabling them to use additional income for improving the quantity and quality of their diets, and for accessing health and sanitation services, whereas governments need to use additional resources for public goods and services to benefit the poor and hungry. Thus, **economic growth is necessary but not sufficient to rapidly accelerate reduction of hunger and malnutrition unless it is equitable** (FAO 2012).

- **A high level of donor commitment is essential to prioritise the fight against hunger and malnutrition**. This is because donor countries can have substantial impact on the prevalence of hunger and undernutrition in poorer countries develop. This influence manifests itself not just through overseas aid but also through the consequences of international cooperation and domestic trade and environmental policies.
- **HANCI has been created with the view that transparency and accessible data is key to holding governments to account.** Monitoring government action empowers people to demand more from their governments. With millions of lives at stake greater public accountability on this key development issue is essential.

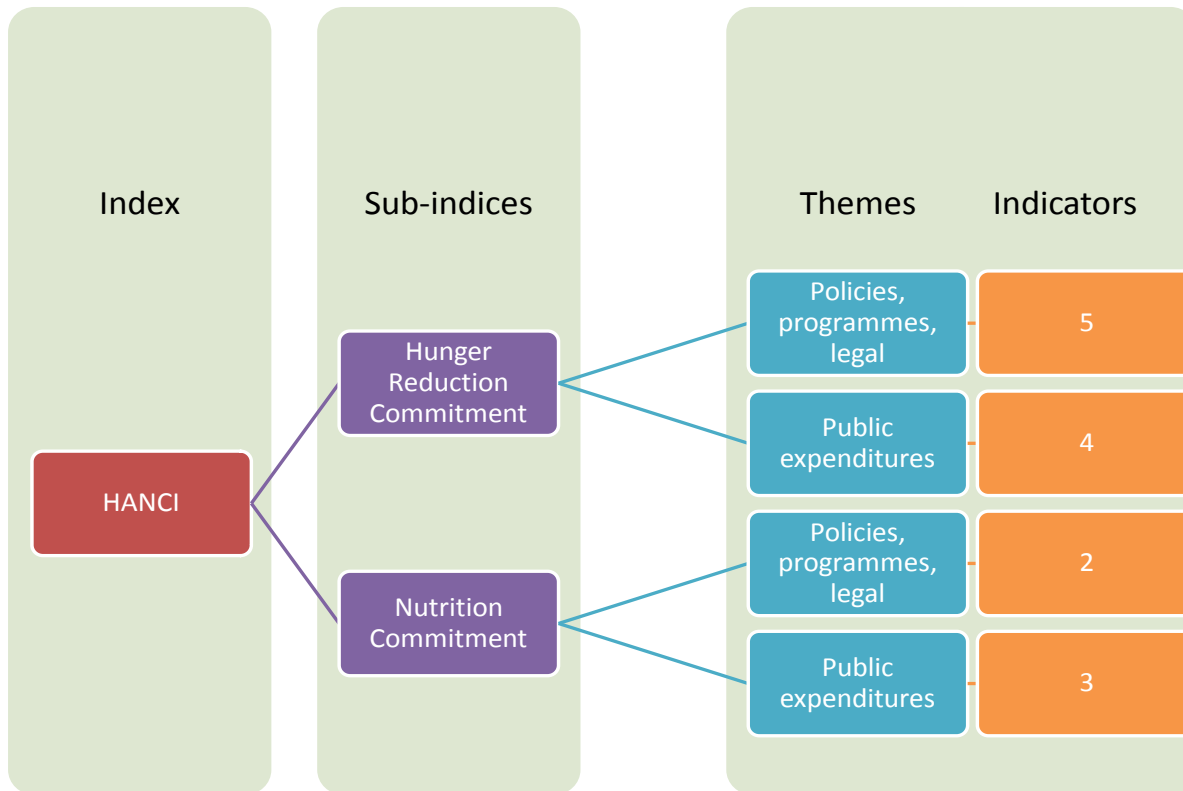
## The Research Methodology

### Indicators

We compared **23 donor countries** for their performance on **14 indicators of political commitment to reduce hunger and undernutrition**. We looked at two areas of donor government action:

- Policies and Programmes
- Public Expenditures

**Figure: Structure HANCI for donor countries**



3

The HANCI Donor Index rankings compare countries against one another, using 14 indicators spanning the dimensions of agriculture and food security; nutrition; climate change; gender; and social protection. These broadly assess whether countries:

- Commit to and disburse financial assistance, do so enduringly, and keeping in mind their capacity to give support and the estimated funds needed to tackle the problems;
- establish domestic policy action that is coherent with anti hunger and undernutrition objectives of its foreign aid policy (especially in relation to climate change and agricultural sector protection);
- engage in international agreements and treaties that help address hunger and undernutrition.

Critically, the HANCI Donor Index assesses country performance in the light of their ability to contribute to reducing hunger and undernutrition in the developing world. The index hence puts the absolute size of aid volumes and performance on policy pledges within context: countries having bigger shoulders need to carry a heavier burden.

Spending indicators include the amount of aid given to agriculture and food security; nutrition; social protection and climate change relative to a country's wealth and to the required need. Aid spending is further assessed for its endurance and consistency over the past decade, in order to determine which donors 'stay the course'.

Policy, programme and legal indicators assess donors' domestic policy action on climate change; biofuels; and unfair protection of its agricultural sector, and assess international collaboration to protect biodiversity and to support the international Scaling Up Nutrition movement.

HANCI separately measures commitment to reduce hunger and commitment to reduce undernutrition, because **hunger and undernutrition are not the same thing**. Hunger is the result of an empty stomach, and caused by people having insufficient income or social and economic entitlements to access food. Hunger makes people more susceptible to disease and thus leads to increased illness and death. Hunger strongly undermines development. To 'cope' with hunger families can be forced to sell vital assets, such as farming tools, often perpetuating their vulnerability to hunger. Hunger can mean that children (particularly girls) are taken out of school so they can work; it causes communities to migrate away from their homes and, at worst, leads to permanent destitution, prostitution, and child trafficking. Hunger also contributes to the onset of armed conflict (Foresight project 2011, p.3).

Undernutrition is related to, though subtly different from hunger. Undernutrition is not only a consequence of hunger, but can also exist in the absence of hunger, and can be caused by non-food factors. Undernutrition results from both a critical lack of nutrients in people's diets and a weakened immune system. In a vicious cycle, poor nutritional intake can make people more susceptible to infectious diseases whilst exposure to disease can lower people's appetite and nutrient absorption. Undernutrition in the first 1000 days of a child's life (from conception until the age of two) has lifelong and largely irreversible impacts because it impairs a child's physical and mental development. Undernutrition increases the risk of chronic diseases and premature death in adulthood, and negatively affects people's lifelong ability to learn, be economically productive, earn income and sustain their livelihoods, and thus perpetuates poverty. In short, undernutrition undermines all aspects of development.

**Because hunger and nutrition are not the same thing, we investigate both hunger reduction commitment and undernutrition reduction commitment using distinct measures.**

For instance, donor governments can financially support child care and feeding programmes and invest in sanitation: such measures are critical for improving nutrition, though less clearly related to hunger. Conversely, emergency food aid, or agricultural development programmes can help to reduce hunger by increasing food availability, but are often not aimed at achieving a balanced diet. By separately analysing nutrition commitment and hunger reduction commitment we identify how donors prioritise action on hunger and/or undernutrition.

## **Key findings**

**UK amongst leading countries in fight against hunger and undernutrition.** The United Kingdom has achieved the highest score out of 23 OECD countries for spending, policies and treaty commitments that could help to reduce hunger and undernutrition in developing countries. The UK particularly owes its high score, just beating Canada and Denmark, to its strong performance on policy, programme and legal indicators. It does well supporting the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement; biodiversity protecting agreements and has relatively low levels of protection of domestic agricultural markets. In terms of spending, the UK has a strong record delivering on its commitments for nutrition; whereas its ODA support for nutrition (while not being highest) have been stable and enduring over the last decade. However, the UK scores poorly when compared to other countries on several spending indicators: its levels of aid funding for agricultural development, food security and climate change are comparatively low.

**Canada** does well on policies, programmes and legal indicators. It supports the SUN movement, does well in terms of low protection of agricultural markets and sets relatively low biofuel blending mandates, and is amongst the top performers in terms of delivering on its green house gas emission reduction pledges. Its performance on spending indicators is variable. Canada leads in terms of its enduringly stable financial support for agriculture and food security over the last decade. It does also fairly well on this for nutrition. However, Canada however also shows weak spending performance on social protection and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

**Denmark** scores well for spending indicators. It gives a solid performance in terms of supporting nutrition (second highest of all countries), and this support is stable and enduring. It also invests well in climate change

adaptation and mitigation. Spending support for climate change is not entirely coherent with policy action on this. Denmark does poorly in terms of delivering on its greenhouse gas emission reduction pledges, yet is leading on the development of domestic climate change adaptation strategies and plans. As an EU member state, Denmark's biofuel mandates are amongst the highest. Denmark is a member of the SUN and does fairly well in terms of its relatively low protection of domestic agricultural markets (within the group of countries) and support for biodiversity agreements.

**Germany** and **Ireland** complete the group of countries leading on commitment. Germany performs strongly on most policy, programme and legal framework indicators, somewhat contrasting with its scores on spending indicators. Ireland gains especially strong scores on biodiversity, endorsement of SUN, and is amongst the top donors investing in social protection. Ireland also shows enduring and stable financial support for agriculture and food security.

### **Commitment to reducing hunger is not the same as commitment to reducing undernutrition**

Several countries score highly diverse rankings for nutrition commitment and for hunger reduction commitment. For instance, Australia is 4<sup>th</sup> on HRCI, and 18<sup>th</sup> on NCI rankings, Finland 1<sup>st</sup> on HRCI, 20<sup>th</sup> on NCI; whereas Sweden and Japan do much better on NCI (respectively 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>) than on HRCI (14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>). This suggests that commitment to reducing hunger is not the same as having commitment to reducing undernutrition.

### **South Korea, Portugal, Greece and Austria rank lowest on the HANCI Donor Index**

South Korea is a relatively new donor. Its spending on hunger and nutrition is relatively low, and Korea is not a member of the SUN movement. However it does fairly well in terms of offering stable and enduring financial support for agriculture and food security, it has relatively low biofuel mandates and is putting policies in place to deal with climate change adaptation.

While Greece and Portugal are in the throes of prolonged economic downturns and extremely vulnerable public finances, Austria is not. Austria invests relatively little in nutrition; agriculture and food security; social protection and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Its investments in agriculture, food security and nutrition are not very stable over time. In terms of policy, Austrian biofuel mandates are amongst the highest (as an EU member). Austria does however do well in terms of relatively low agricultural protection and in putting in place strategies and plans to address climate change adaptation.

### **Good development partners could do more for hunger and nutrition**

Donors championing the cause of hunger and nutrition are not necessarily the biggest spenders. The ten highest HANCI Donor rankings are not strongly correlated to the share of the Gross National Income (GNI) given as aid. This also suggests that countries that have a relatively good track record on international development like France, Norway, the Netherlands and Switzerland, who are not in the top 10 HANCI rankings, could do more for hunger and nutrition.

### **Notes**

HANCI has been produced by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) with funding from Irish Aid and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID).

**The Institute of Development Studies (IDS)** is a leading global charity for [international development research](#), [teaching](#) and [communications](#). Our vision is a world in which poverty does not exist, social justice prevails and economic growth is focused on improving human wellbeing. We believe that research knowledge can drive the change that must happen in order for this vision to be realised. [www.ids.ac.uk](http://www.ids.ac.uk)

See overleaf for full scores and groupings

## Total scores and groupings from the HANCI Donor Index

Green= leading on commitment (top 1/3<sup>rd</sup>)

Orange= moderate commitment (middle 1/3<sup>rd</sup>)

Red = relatively low commitment (bottom 1/3<sup>rd</sup>)

	HANCI Score	HRCI Score	NCI Score	HANCI Ranks	HRCI Ranks	NCI Ranks
United Kingdom	78	34	44	1	4	1
Canada	74	36	38	2	2	3
Denmark	73	32	41	3	6	2
Germany	65	29	36	4	9	5
Ireland	61	31	30	5	7	8
Sweden	59	21	38	6	14	3
Belgium	58	27	31	7	11	6
Spain	57	35	22	8	3	13
Luxembourg	53	26	27	9	12	9
Finland	52	37	15	10	1	20
Norway	51	28	23	11	10	11
Australia	50	34	16	12	4	18
France	50	25	25	12	13	10
Switzerland	48	30	18	14	8	15
Japan	47	16	31	15	18	6
Netherlands	43	20	23	16	16	11
New Zealand	37	21	16	17	14	18
Italy	29	10	19	18	21	14
United States of America	29	12	17	18	20	17
Austria	23	17	6	20	17	22
Greece	23	5	18	20	23	15
Portugal	23	10	13	20	21	21
South Korea	22	16	6	23	18	22