

## MEDIA RELEASE

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**Embargo: 9am 13 August 2018**

### **TIME TO ACT ON THE GLOBAL BURDEN OF MALNUTRITION**

The massive, complex burden of multiple malnutrition outcomes has consequences that are staggering not only for the health and wellbeing of individuals, but also economically, socially and environmentally costly for society.

This will be a key message of Dr Jessica Fanzo, Senior Nutrition and Food Systems Officer in the Nutrition and Food Systems Division of the UN FAO, and the Bloomberg Distinguished Associate Professor of Global Food and Agriculture Policy and Ethics at the Johns Hopkins University, in her address to “*Reshaping Agriculture for Better Nutrition: The Agriculture, Food, Nutrition, Health Nexus*”, the 2018 Crawford Fund annual conference in Canberra on 13-14 August.

Dr Fanzo will join international and Australian specialists to discuss how to reshape agriculture to address the increasingly urgent and competing needs of the hungry and the over-nourished, and the finite resources of our environment.

“While 800 million people go to bed hungry, one in three is malnourished today and one in two could be malnourished by 2030 if nothing is done,” said Dr Fanzo

“Undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight and obesity now affects all countries, whether low-, middle- or high-income. These forms of malnutrition can co-exist within the same individual, household, community and country. They must be fought altogether,” said Dr Fanzo, who is also Co-Chair of the Global Nutrition Report.

“It comes down to agriculture and food - food systems are critical to address the multiple burdens of malnutrition through food supply chains, food environments and diets.”

“We have proof of what interventions can be taken up and scaled by governments and food system actors to address these complex issues.”

“We have a moral obligation to act and we must take shared action. Agriculture, food supply chain and food environment actors, whether small or large, need to be supported to shift towards nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems,” she said.

Dr Fanzo reported shocking figures including that 22%, or 150 million, children under the age of five are chronically undernourished, or stunted with terrible impacts. Fifty million children are wasted or acutely malnourished with high risk of mortality, and on the opposite side, 38 million children are overweight. Over 2 billion people are overweight and obese and that number is rising in all countries.

The conference will discuss what strategies are working and provide case studies of success and impact in regions including in Timor Leste, PNG, Bangladesh, and Africa.