

# An impermanent subsidy: Cheap industrial food and the urban margins

Tony Weis, Marylynn Steckley and Bruce Frayne

Panel 1: Grand Challenges

Ten Years of Urbanization, Food Systems and Sustainability in the Global South. Balsillie School of International Affairs, Waterloo, July 3-4 2018

# Outline

## **The Problems**

Agriculture  
Urbanization

## **The Conundrum**

Sustainable Urbanization: Cheap Food & Poverty

## **A Way Forward**

Food for People and Ecology

- Zero Hunger (SDG 2)
- Sustainable Cities (SDG 11)

# The Problem with Agriculture

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One meal prepared every second = 725 years

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# A miracle, perhaps – is the genie out of the bottle?

25,000 people die every day from hunger and related causes

1 billion people food insecure

3 billion more people by 2050

+40% of agricultural land and ocean resources degraded

Climate change is upon us

Sources: FAO, IFPRI, UNFPA, UNEP

# The Problem with Urbanization

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## Global Urban Transition

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- ~ Food and nutrition insecurity - rural-urban transfer
- ~ Cheap food produced at scale - underpins urbanization (good and bad)

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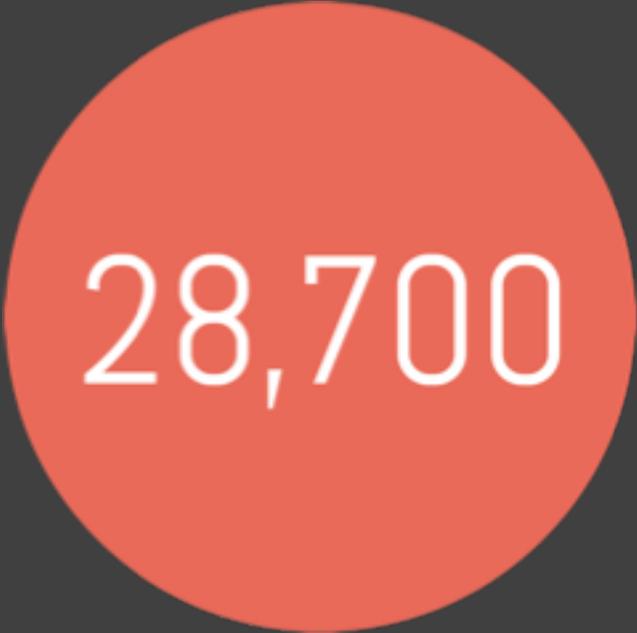
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## What does the evidence show?

# AFSUN BASELINE UFS SURVEY

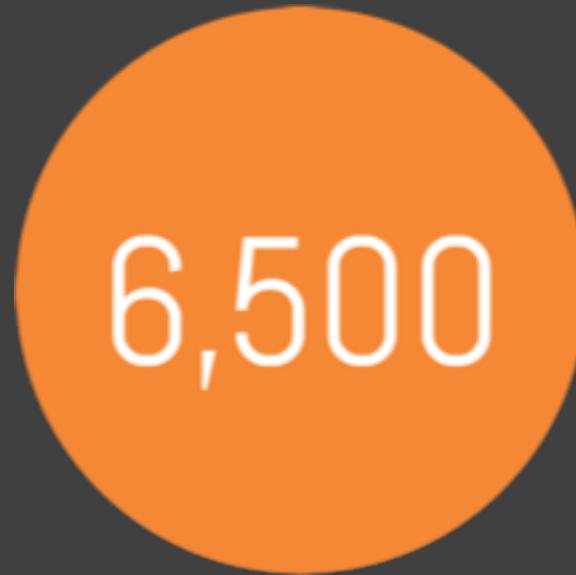
# AFSUN BASELINE UFS SURVEY



28,700

INDIVIDUALS

# AFSUN BASELINE UFS SURVEY



HOUSEHOLDS



INDIVIDUALS

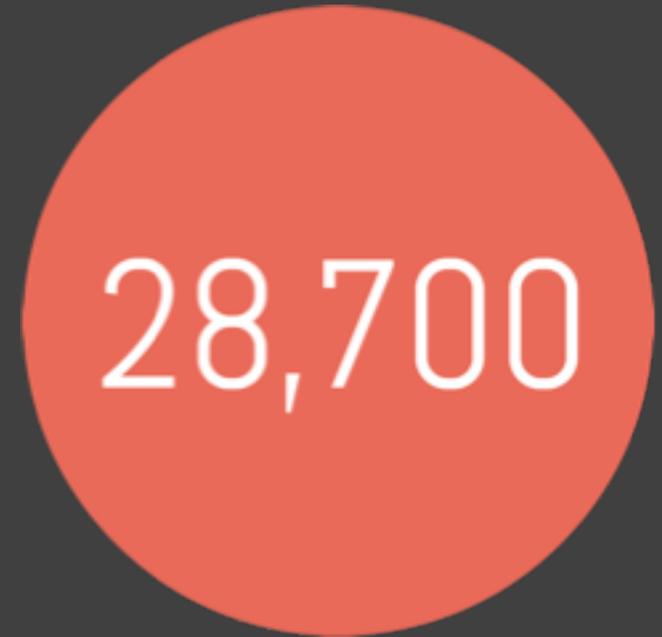
# AFSUN BASELINE UFS SURVEY



CITIES



HOUSEHOLDS



INDIVIDUALS

# AFSUN BASELINE UFS SURVEY

9

COUNTRIES

11

CITIES

6,500

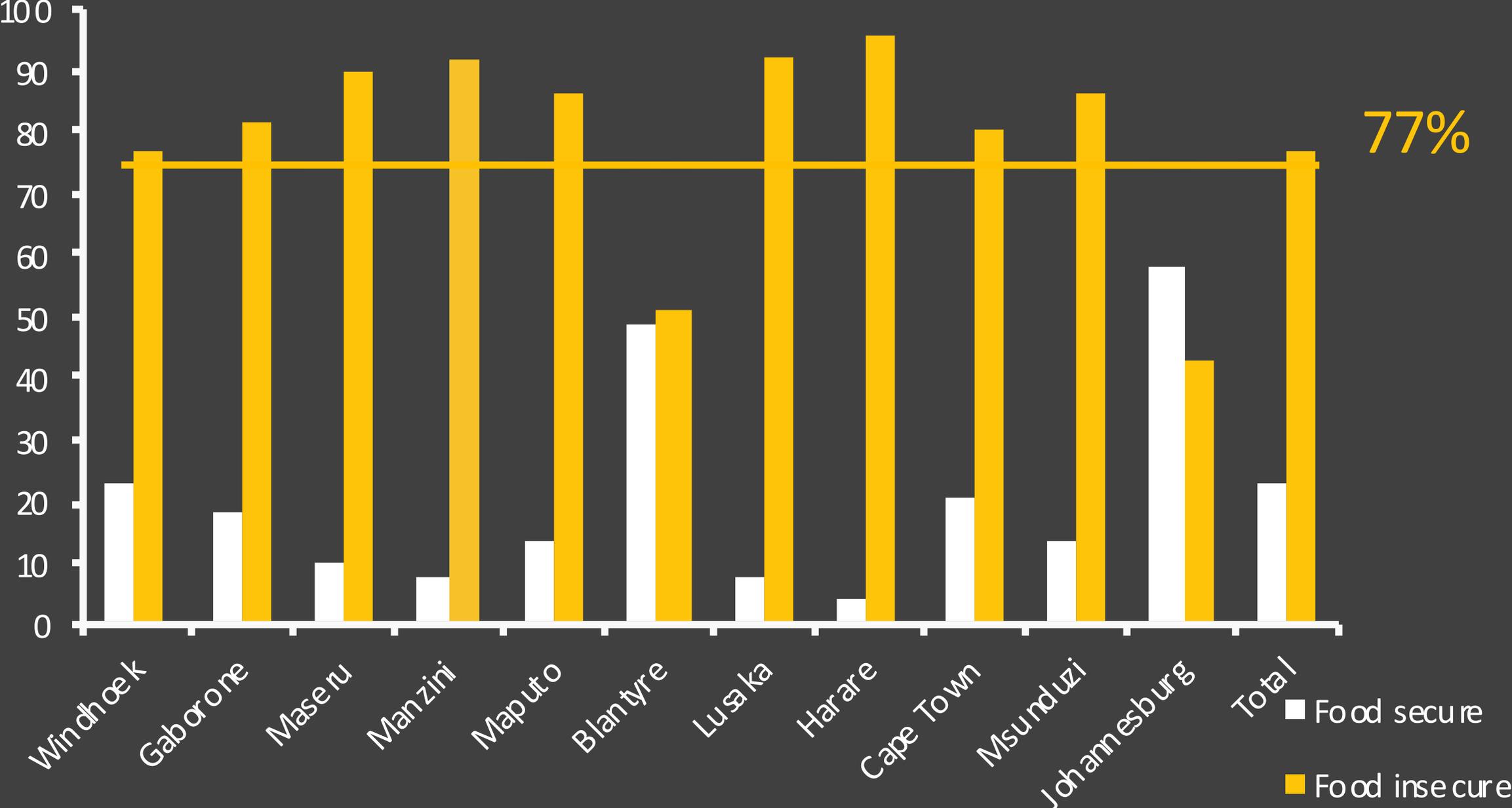
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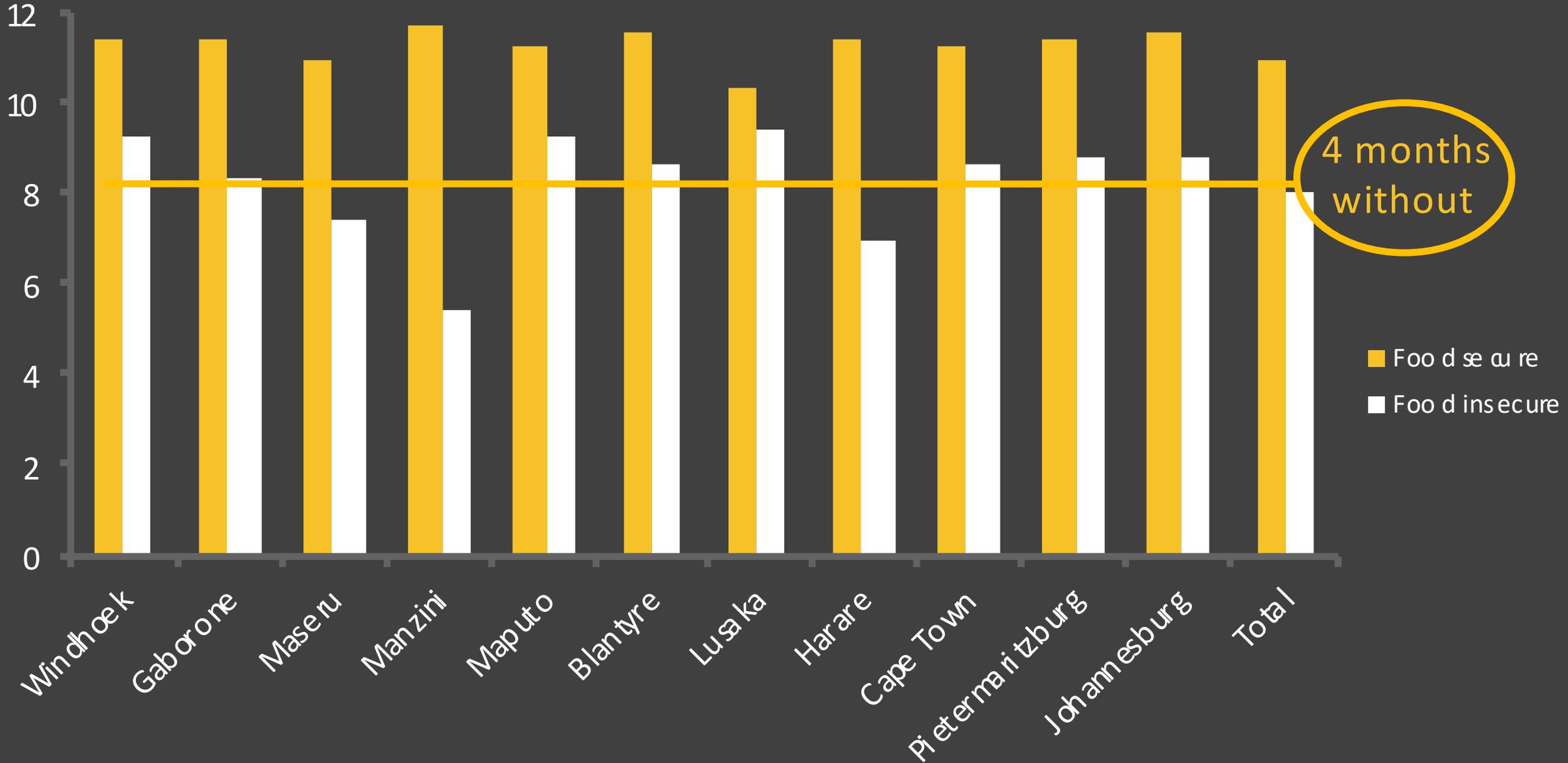
**What is the level of household food insecurity amongst the survey population of urban poor for 11 cities?**

# Household Food Security Status for 11 Cities



# Months of Adequate Household Food Provisioning (months in past year)

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# Household Dietary Diversity

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12

PERFECT

# Household Dietary Diversity



HEALTHY



PERFECT

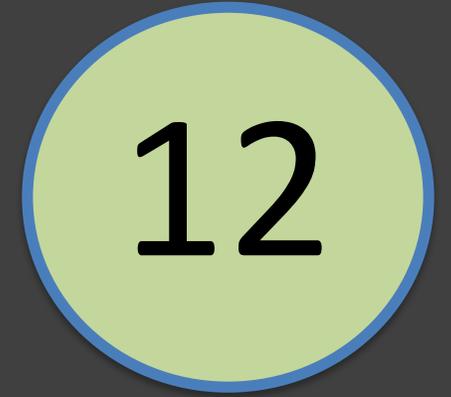
# Household Dietary Diversity



REPORTED



HEALTHY



PERFECT

# Household Dietary Diversity



ACTUAL



REPORTED



HEALTHY



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# The Conundrum

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~ transfer of rural poverty to urban areas

~ post manufacturing era

~ jobless growth / AI futures

~ poorest region (SSA) with the highest population growth

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## Industrial Food

- ~ cheap and required to fuel the urban transition
- ~ unsustainable with dire ecological & human consequences
- ~ climate change and fossil fuel nexus
- ~ rural lifestyle unsustainable under current conditions

# The Grand Challenge(s)

HOW CAN WE FEED AN URBANIZING POPULATION IN THE CONTEXT OF RURAL AND URBAN POVERTY, ECOLOGICAL BOUNDARIES AND JOBLESS FUTURES?

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HOW DO WE ENSURE FOOD AND NUTRITIONALLY SECURE POPULATIONS IN AFRICA WITH THREE BILLION MORE PEOPLE THAT WILL BE LIVING IN CITIES YET TO BE BUILT?

# A Way Forward – Food for People and Ecology

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Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)

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Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)

Food, Agriculture, Biodiversity, Land Use and Energy (FABLE)  
Pathways Consortium

# FABLE

## Sustainable Food, Land, Water, and Oceans

**Pillar 1:**  
Efficient and resilient agricultural systems and fisheries that support livelihoods

**Pillar 2:**  
Conservation and restoration of forests, terrestrial and marine biodiversity

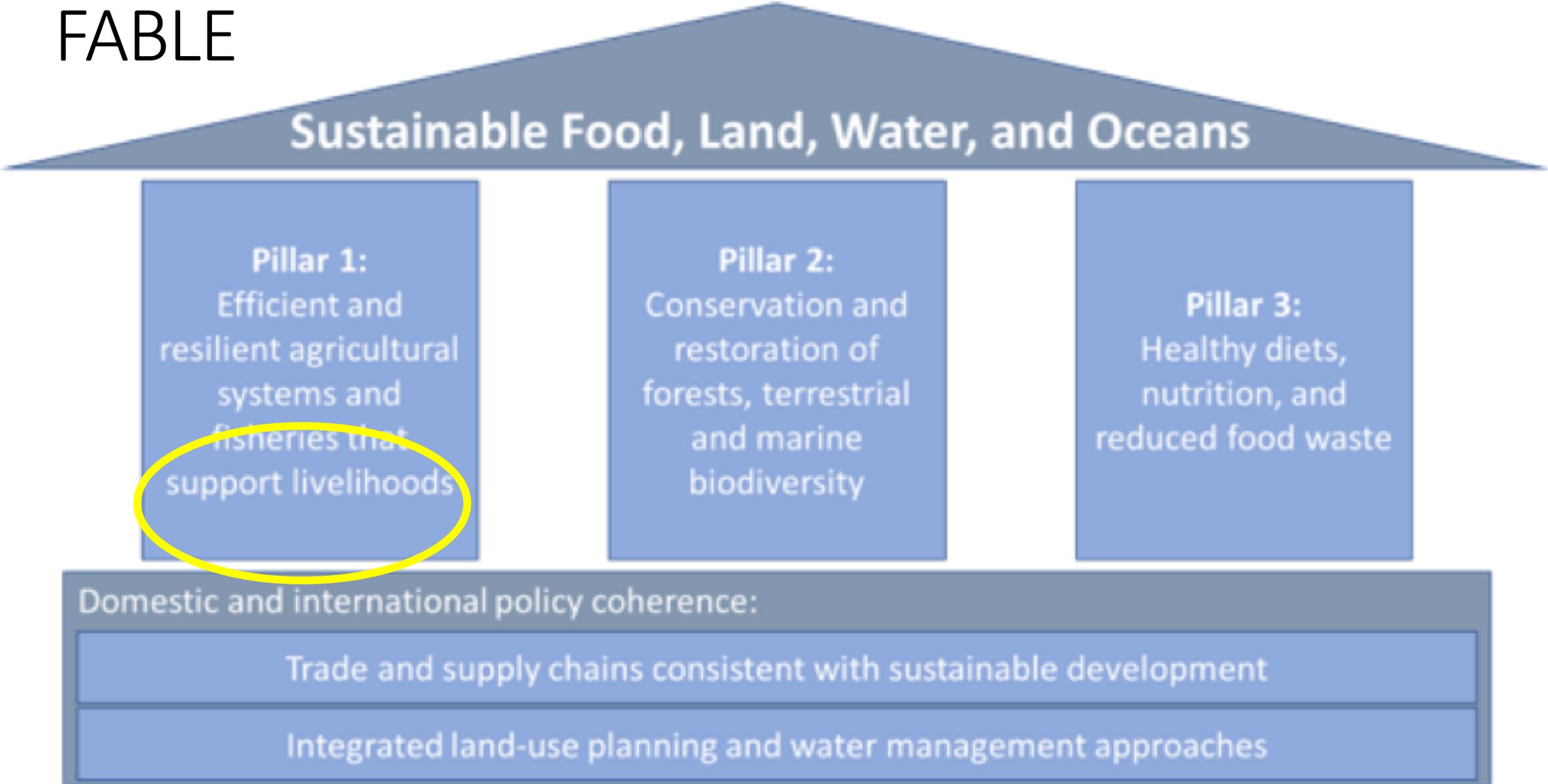
**Pillar 3:**  
Healthy diets, nutrition, and reduced food waste

Domestic and international policy coherence:

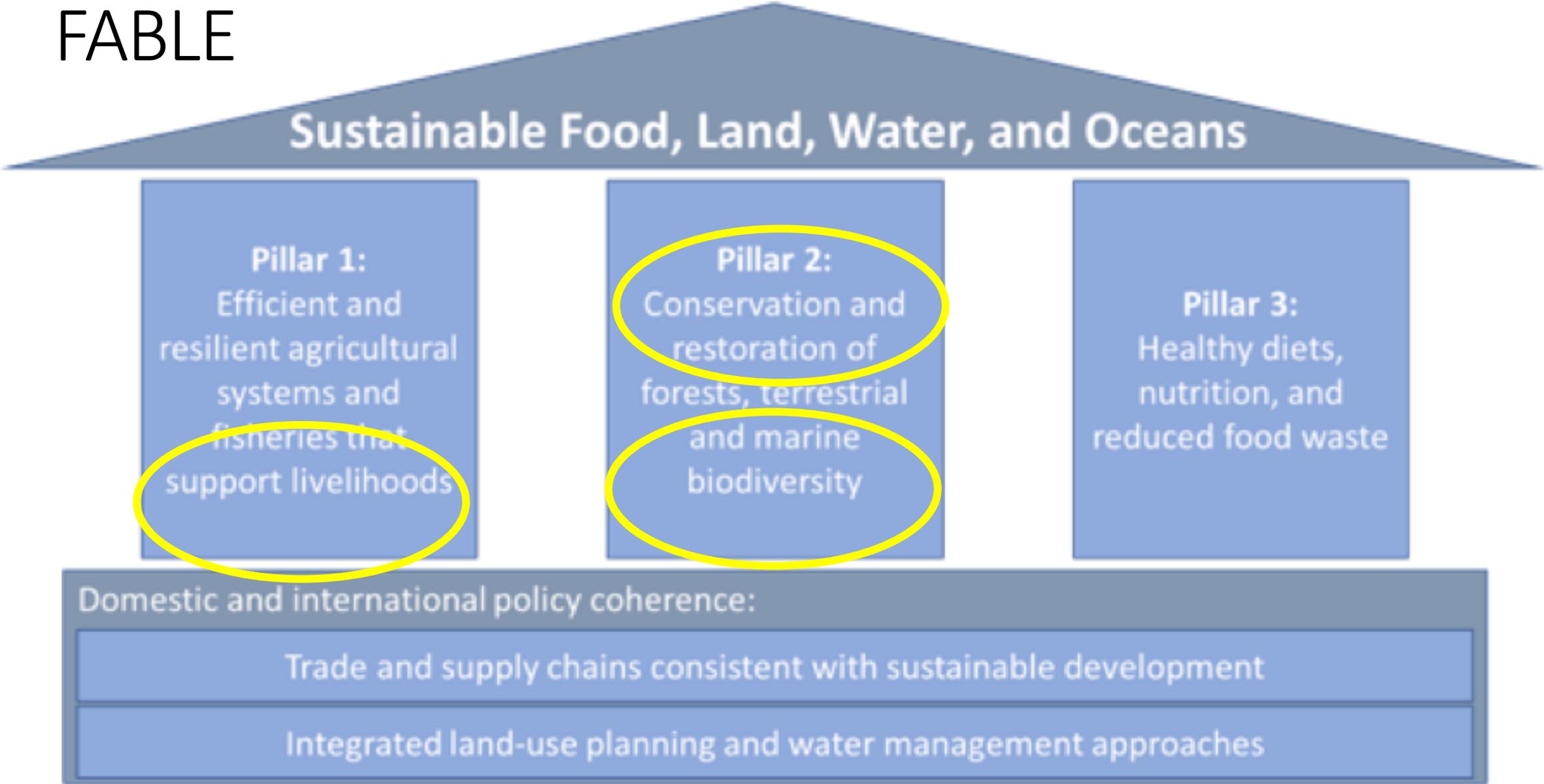
Trade and supply chains consistent with sustainable development

Integrated land-use planning and water management approaches

# FABLE



# FABLE



# FABLE

