

# The G7 and Sustainable Agri-Food Systems' Transformation: Lessons Learned from the Italian Presidency

by Daniele Fattibene

## ABSTRACT

Italy put a strong emphasis on food and nutrition security during its 2024 G7 Presidency, designing or scaling up plans to transform global food systems. Although the Italian presidency was able to gather consensus on key dimensions such as the food and climate nexus or development finance, structural weaknesses remain. Among them, the limited representation of Global South interests, the lack of space for civil society and farmers' organisations in the decision-making process and the institutional rivalry between the Finance and the Development Tracks. While the G7 can more easily mobilise consensus and financial solutions to tackle global hunger, it has gradually lost ground to settings such as the G20 or the UN climate conference generally known as COP. The G7 must align its food-security solutions with those designed by other global partners (the G20 Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, or the EU's Global Gateway) that can more effectively address food insecurity, while tackling all the barriers that make it too risky for local actors and the private sector to invest in sustainable agri-food systems transformation.

*G7 | Agriculture | Food security*

**keywords**

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by Daniele Fattibene\*

## Introduction

After years of improvement, the polycrisis caused by, inter alia, the Covid-19 pandemic, the food price crisis generated by the war against Ukraine and the spiral of conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East are hitting hard the global sustainability agenda, particularly on the fight against hunger and malnutrition. The 2024 State of Food Insecurity in the World shows that for three years in a row the global prevalence of undernourishment has not decreased, with up to 757 million people who may have faced hunger in 2023,<sup>1</sup> and with more than one third of the global population (2.8 billion people) unable to access healthy and nutritious diets.

Conflicts are a powerful accelerator of food crises, and according to the World Food Programme's (WFP) *Hunger Hotspots* report, they are likely to deteriorate food insecurity in 18 hunger hotspots, notably in Haiti, Mali, Palestine, South Sudan and Sudan.<sup>2</sup> The 2024 Italian G7 Presidency sought to launch or scale up various

<sup>1</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) et al., *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024. Financing to End Hunger, Food Insecurity and Malnutrition in All Its Forms*, Rome, FAO, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd1254en>.

<sup>2</sup> FAO and World Food Programme (WFP), *Hunger Hotspots. FAO-WFP Early Warnings on Acute Food Insecurity: June to October 2024 Outlook*, June 2024, <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd0979en>.

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initiatives to address global food crises, seeking to work more horizontally than in the past with partners in Europe and the Global South to mobilise public and private financial resources. While the G7 has a strong potential to build consensus and mobilise significant financial resources to address global food challenges, the increasingly polarised global order requires effective coordination with other policy processes, such as the G20 or the Conference of Parties (COPs), the UN climate conference. The latter offer higher levels of representation for the demands of the Global South and stronger political and financial firepower than the G7. The G7 members host less than 10 per cent of global population and its share of global GDP shrank from around 70 per cent in 1990 to 44 per cent in 2024.<sup>3</sup>

In the past 15 years, the G7 has adopted several actions to tackle food insecurity worldwide. The Italian Presidency built upon this tradition, launching new or scaling up existing initiatives such as the Apulia Food Security initiative, the Technical Cooperation Collaborative, the Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils and the Public-Private Initiative on Coffee. Moreover, the Italian presidency designed interesting plans to harness the potential of development finance to support a sustainable transformation of food systems. Despite these efforts, G7 actions are still hampered by structural weaknesses, such as the lack of strong financial commitments to support all the deliverables agreed by the leaders, the lack of coordination with more representative fora like the G20, and continuous institutional rivalry between the Finance and Development Tracks. The G7 risks being ineffective if it does not bring non-state actors (farmers' organisations, civil society organisations) fully on board in the decision-making process. In light of this, two main questions arise: is the G7 the right institutional setting to foster a true and inclusive cooperation with the Global South on food security challenges? How to include non-state actors, that are key to eradicate hunger, in the G7 decision making process? These two questions provide benchmarks to assess the main deliverables put forward by the Italian G7 Presidency in the fields of development finance and sustainable food systems.

### Financing sustainable food systems transformations

#### *De-risking investments in the agri-food sector*

The G7 has historically been tasked with addressing global food crises and boosting investments in agri-food systems. However, effectively quantifying the magnitude of the resources needed globally to tackle these crises has always been hard. Organisations, donor countries, multilateral institutions and research groups use various definitions of official development assistance (ODA) for food security and nutrition. This results in very different estimates of how much aid is actually going towards food security and nutrition efforts. As an example, estimates of G7

<sup>3</sup> Marcus Lu, "Charted: The G7's Declining Share of Global GDP", in *Visual Capitalist*, 16 July 2024, <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/charted-the-g7s-declining-share-of-global-gdp>.

countries' contributions to food security and nutrition in 2022 ranged from as little as 3.8 billion dollars to 54 billion dollars.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, experts of the Shamba Centre for Food and Climate are proposing to develop a Food Security and Nutrition Aid Tracker to provide a comprehensive and analytical overview of the ODA flows that have an impact on food security and nutrition, as well as examining the extent to which existing spending patterns are aligned with scientific evidence on how to end hunger.<sup>5</sup>

Globally, it is estimated that agri-food systems need 260 billion dollars per year in climate-smart investments.<sup>6</sup> This means that without a massive mobilisation of public and private funds it will be impossible to transform food systems and support the needs of small-holder farmers. This is particularly relevant in Sub-Saharan Africa, where only 1.7 per cent of climate finance in the food and agriculture sector was allocated to small-scale producers,<sup>7</sup> whose financial needs are estimated at around 170 billion dollars per year.<sup>8</sup> In addition, investing in food supply chains, particularly in remote or fragile areas in low- and middle-income countries is still considered very risks by private investors. One reason is that climate-related disasters are a major cause of risk in agriculture. For instance, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), over the last thirty years, an estimated 3.8 trillion dollars' worth of crops and livestock production has been lost due to disaster events, corresponding to an average loss of 123 billion dollars per year, or 5 per cent of annual global agricultural GDP.<sup>9</sup> Supporting agriculture requires lifting several types of barriers (trade tariffs) that severely hamper intra-regional trade flows. As an example, a report from the World Bank shows that a full implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area could raise incomes by 9 per cent by 2035 and lift 50 million people out of extreme poverty.<sup>10</sup> All these risks and barriers can explain why only 4.3 per cent of the total climate finance tracked went to the agriculture, forestry and land use sectors in 2019-2020, while 85 per cent of this

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Mali Eber Rose and Carin Smaller, "Tracking G7 Aid to Food Security and Nutrition", in *Shamba Centre Insights*, 18 June 2024, <https://www.shambacentre.org/tracking-g7-aid-to-food-security-and-nutrition>.

<sup>6</sup> William R. Sutton, Alexander Lotsch and Ashesh Prasann, *Recipe for a Livable Planet. Achieving Net Zero Emissions in the Agrifood System*, Washington, World Bank, May 2024, <https://hdl.handle.net/10986/41468>.

<sup>7</sup> International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), *More Climate Finance in Support of Small-Scale Farmers Is Urgently Needed, Warns IFAD at Stockholm+50*, 2 June 2022, <https://www.ifad.org/en/w/news/more-climate-finance-in-support-of-small-scale-farmers-is-urgently-needed-warns-ifad-at-stockholm-50>.

<sup>8</sup> Daniela Chiriac, Harsha Vishnumolakala and Paul Rosane, *The Climate Finance Gap for Small-Scale Agrifood Systems*, Climate Policy Initiative, November 2023, <https://www.climatepolicyinitiative.org/?p=60061>.

<sup>9</sup> FAO, *The Impact of Disasters on Agriculture and Food Security 2023. Avoiding and Reducing Losses through Investment in Resilience*, Rome, FAO, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc7900en>.

<sup>10</sup> Roberto Echandi, Maryla Maliszewska and Victor Steenbergen, *Making the Most of the African Continental Free Trade Area: Leveraging Trade and Foreign Direct Investment to Boost Growth and Reduce Poverty*, Washington, World Bank, 2022, <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/37623>.

funding came from public sources.<sup>11</sup>

Before the Italian Presidency, the G8 (the Russian Federation was suspended as a G8 member in 2014) and G7 rolled out various initiatives to alleviate hunger and support agri-food systems transformation in the past 15 years. The main relevant were the Aquila Food Security Initiative in 2009,<sup>12</sup> the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa in 2012<sup>13</sup> and the Global Alliance for Food Security in 2022.<sup>14</sup> Although these initiatives were important attempts to alleviate food insecurity and boost agricultural investments<sup>15</sup> from the private sector in low-and middle-income countries, they were also heavily criticised. The main criticism came from key donors (France left the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in 2018), but especially from small-scale producers and farmers' organisations in the Global South, over concerns about transparency of the decision-making processes, lack of co-design and even land grabbing operated by big transnational corporations.<sup>16</sup>

### *The main areas of intervention*

The Italian G7 Presidency put sustainable agri-food systems' transformation at the core of its policy agenda, seeking a more horizontal and incremental approach than in the past. Africa played a central role, and the government tried to promote and seek synergies of G7 initiatives with its Mattei Plan for Africa, Italy's new Africa strategy launched at the end of 2023 which is gradually re-designing Italy's development cooperation.<sup>17</sup> In particular, the presidency's actions within the Development Track revolved around two main pillars: food security and sustainable finance. On food security, the Italian Presidency launched various new initiatives such as the Apulia Food Systems Initiative or the Public Private Initiative on coffee, with the creation of a global coffee sustainability and resilience fund aimed to alleviate poverty in the coffee sector<sup>18</sup> and tackle unsustainable farming practices

<sup>11</sup> Daniela Chiriac, Harsha Vishnumolakala and Paul Rosane, *The Climate Finance Gap*, cit.

<sup>12</sup> USAID, *Camp David Accountability Report Actions, Approach and Results*, 2012, <https://2017-2020.usaid.gov/g8/accountability-report>.

<sup>13</sup> USAID, *Key Facts: The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition*, 2013, <https://2017-2020.usaid.gov/documents/1867/key-facts-new-alliance-food-security-and-nutrition>.

<sup>14</sup> German Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development and World Bank, *Joint Statement: G7 Presidency, World Bank Group Establish Global Alliance for Food Security to Catalyze Response to Food Crisis*, 19 May 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/statement/2022/05/19/joint-statement-g7-presidency-wbg-establish-global-alliance-for-food-security>.

<sup>15</sup> Olivier De Schutter, "The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa", in *EPRS Studies*, November 2015, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EXPO\\_STU\(2015\)535010](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EXPO_STU(2015)535010).

<sup>16</sup> Foundation for Farmers Organisations and Restorative Action (FFORA), *G7 Food Systems Initiative: Lessons to Be Learned from Past Mistakes*, June 2024, <https://ffora.org/news/f/g7-food-systems-initiative-lessons-to-be-learned>.

<sup>17</sup> Italian Government, *Relazione sullo stato di attuazione del Piano Mattei*, 10 October 2024, <https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/1435451.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Mirjam Pulleman, Eric Rahn and José Francisco Valle, *Regenerative Agriculture for Low-Carbon and Resilient Coffee Farms. A Practical Guidebook*, Version 1.0., Cali, International Center for Tropical Agriculture, 2023, <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/131997>.

that often lead to massive deforestation.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, Italy built on existing projects (e.g., the 2023 Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils<sup>20</sup> launched by the United States, or the Technical Cooperation Collaborative resulting from the COP28 Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action<sup>21</sup>) and fully supported the G20 Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty. Nevertheless, it still remains to be seen how all these initiatives will be implemented, since the G7 leaders did not make clear financial commitments to operationalise the Apulia Food Systems Initiative.

On sustainable finance, supporting sustainable food systems transformation was at the centre of Italy's political agenda, with a key role played by Cassa Depositi e Prestiti – the Italian development finance institution (DFI). The G7 launched the Public Development Bank (PDB) Development Finance Institution Collaborative on Sustainable Food Systems to reduce financial risks and transaction costs for both public and private investments through financial guarantees or grants,<sup>22</sup> and to facilitate investments on the climate-biodiversity-food nexus in middle- and low-income countries. The PDB Collaborative's work plan was presented in December 2024 and has been fully incorporated in Canada's G7 policy agenda for 2025, ensuring a strong continuity with the previous Italian G7 Presidency.<sup>23</sup> The Collaborative is a very concrete step to assess and reduce the financial risks linked with food and nutrition projects, for instance by increasing the share of lending in local currencies, which can push domestic lenders to invest into agri-food and nutrition markets.<sup>24</sup> The G7 also welcomed the set-up of a Financing facility for a shock-driven food crisis to be hosted at FAO Headquarters in coordination with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA). The facility is expected to provide rapid-response financing in anticipation of high levels of acute food insecurity.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, experts and

<sup>19</sup> Sjoerd Panhuysen and Frederik de Vries, *Coffee Barometer 2023*, Coffee Barometer Consortium, September 2023, [https://coffeebarometer.org/documents\\_resources/coffee\\_barometer\\_2023.pdf](https://coffeebarometer.org/documents_resources/coffee_barometer_2023.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> FAO, *Strengthening Global Food Security: FAO and the U.S. Spotlight the Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils Initiative at the 12th Global Soil Partnership Assembly*, 20 June 2024, <https://www.fao.org/north-america/news/details/strengthening-global-food-security-fao-and-u.s.-spotlight-the-vision-for-adapted-crops-and-soils-initiative-at-12th-global-soil-partnership-assembly/en>.

<sup>21</sup> COP28, *Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action*, 20 December 2023, <https://www.tralac.org/documents/resources/external-relations/united-nations/5095-cop28-uae-declaration-on-sustainable-agriculture-resilient-food-systems-and-climate-action/file.html>.

<sup>22</sup> G7, *G7 Development Ministers' Meeting*, Pescara, 22-24 October 2024 Communiqué, <https://www.g7italy.it/wp-content/uploads/Communique.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> Interview, 7 February 2025.

<sup>24</sup> Oshani Perera et al., *Unleashing the Catalytic Power of Donor Financing to Achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2: Technical Note*, Global Donor Platform for Rural Development and Shamba Centre for Food & Climate, 2024, [https://www.donorplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/GDPRD\\_Shamba\\_Technical-Note-Unleashing-the-Catalytic-Power-of-Donor-Financing-to-Achieve-SDG2.pdf](https://www.donorplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/GDPRD_Shamba_Technical-Note-Unleashing-the-Catalytic-Power-of-Donor-Financing-to-Achieve-SDG2.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> FAO, *G7 Development Ministers' Meeting: FAO Calls for Increased Focus on Africa amid Rising Hunger*, 23 October 2024, <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/g7-development-ministers-meeting--fao-calls-for-increased-focus-on-africa-amid-rising-hunger/en>.

practitioners are cautious about the real impact of the FAO-WFP-UN OCHA facility, as at the moment there are no clear financial commitments from G7 members were made to support it.<sup>26</sup>

### *Four main critical areas*

Despite all these initiatives have the potential to address some of the above-mentioned barriers that reduce investments in agri-food systems transformations, there were four main critical areas, which pose questions on the real impact that the G7-designed solutions on food systems' financing will have. First, the Apulia Food Systems Initiative and the Finance Collaborative will have to ensure a strong local ownership of both national development banks in the Global South as well as Multilateral and Regional Development Banks, to make sure that investments are really reaching the most fragile and vulnerable communities. The risk is replicating previous mistakes with financial instruments designed top-down without a clear involvement of local actors, in particular of recipients such as local farmers. The Statement of Intent<sup>27</sup> which brought together the heads of G7, international and African financial institutions, is a good starting point but needs to fully take on board local actors in the design and implementation of the Collaborative's work-plan. Furthermore, the Collaborative needs to operate in a flexible and open format, that allows other actors to plug-in but also to work in close synergy with other key initiatives like the Global Gateway of the European Union's flagship geopolitical and geoeconomic initiative that is expected to unlock up to 150 billion euros by 2030 in physical and digital infrastructures.

Second, the G7's food security agenda needs to be aligned with that of other key policy processes and fora in the Global South with stronger financial firepower, like the G20. This is particularly important if we consider that the G7 cannot give full voice to the needs of the Global South. Hence, all decisions must be taken in cooperation with other initiatives that will be launched in more inclusive policy processes such as the COPs, the Finance in Common Summit, the World Bank-International Monetary Fund annual meetings, the Nutrition for Growth Summit and the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development) that can more effectively tackle global hunger and malnutrition.<sup>28</sup> It was important that Italy invited Algeria, Kenya, Mauritania and Tunisia, and pan-regional institutions like the African Union or the African Development Bank Group to join the talk with the G7, both in the Final Summit,<sup>29</sup> as well as during key Ministerial Meetings such as

<sup>26</sup> Interview, 24 October 2024.

<sup>27</sup> Cassa Depositi e Prestiti et al., *G7 Public Development Banks and Development Finance Institutions Statement of Intent. Leveraging the Role of G7 Development Finance in Addressing Global Challenges during the 2024 G7 Italian Presidency*, 9 May 2024, [https://www.cdp.it/resources/cms/documents/2024\\_G7\\_Development\\_Finance\\_Statement\\_of\\_Intent.pdf](https://www.cdp.it/resources/cms/documents/2024_G7_Development_Finance_Statement_of_Intent.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> Interview, 26 November 2024.

<sup>29</sup> G7, *Apulia G7 Leaders' Communiqué*, June 2025, <https://www.g7italy.it/wp-content/uploads/Apulia-G7-Leaders-Communique.pdf>.

the Agricultural or the Development ones. However, if these countries are not taken fully on board in the design of financial initiatives, even with own contributions, this inclusion will be cosmetic rather than substantial.

Third, the food security (and more broadly the development agenda) of the Italian G7 Presidency struggled with the old institutional rivalry and tensions between the Development and the Finance Tracks. Despite high expectations, the two sub-working groups on food security and sustainable finance within the G7 Development Track played a marginal role comparing to the G7 Finance Track. Sustainable agri-food systems transformation struggles to become a key policy priority for the Ministries of Finance and this explains why Finance, Development and Agriculture Ministries keep failing working horizontally to address key development related challenges. Current institutional set-ups do not allow these Ministries to work in a cooperative way on development-related issues. Therefore, although we are slowly moving away from this dichotomy, it will be crucial to bring on board the Ministries of Finance when discussing food systems' transformation and financing, as they are crucial to build enabling environments, de-risk investments and strengthen markets for the private sector and local smallholder farmers.

Finally, the G7 failed to reach agreements on the reform of the international financial architecture to provide more fiscal space for food security and nutrition interventions. Low- and middle-income countries require massive financing in agriculture and these investments are crucial to reduce debt burdens, as agriculture represents 10 per cent of these countries' GDP. Some potential solutions already exist and include increasing the share of grants over that of loans and focusing on the provision of public finance for food systems transformation rather than relying on profit-driven private investment.<sup>30</sup> Against this backdrop, it was particularly frustrating to see that the G7 could not reach consensus on the rechanneling of Special Drawing Rights for food security or debt for food swaps.<sup>31</sup> On the one hand, a recent study shows that rechanneling the Special Drawing Rights issued by the International Monetary Fund (over 108 billion dollars) can improve food security and support investments in sustainable food systems, in low- and middle-income countries, where these investments are constrained by limited fiscal space and high debt vulnerability.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, studies show that debt-for-food security swaps have already been instrumental in addressing food insecurity

<sup>30</sup> Civil7, *C7 Statement ahead of the G7 Ministerial Meeting on Development*, 16 October 2024, <https://2024.civil7.org/wpC7/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/C7-Statements.pdf>.

<sup>31</sup> According to FAO, the debt-for-development swaps refers to a conditional restructuring of a specific part of debt, which in most cases is linked to some form of debt relief. The condition requires that the liberated funds (or a portion of them) are redirected towards a predefined development investment. Especially at times when many low- and middle-income countries – home to the most food-insecure people – are highly indebted, debt swaps provide debtor countries with fiscal space, whereby the cancelled amount is repurposed domestically and typically earmarked for sustainable projects. See FAO et al., *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024*, cit.

<sup>32</sup> San Bilal et al., "Rechanneling Special Drawing Rights for Food Security and Sustainable Food Systems", in *ECDPM Briefs*, No. 180 (April 2024), <https://ecdpm.org/work/rechanneling-special-drawing-rights-food-security-and-sustainable-food-systems>.



and malnutrition, swapping bilateral debt to support for instance school feeding and social protection programmes.<sup>33</sup> For instance, since 2007 up to 145 million dollars were allocated to the World Food Programme to interventions in Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mozambique and Pakistan demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach. Moreover, in 2009 Egypt and Italy signed a debt swap to channelled approximately 15 million dollars' worth of Egyptian debt towards a school feeding project implemented by the World Food Programme.<sup>34</sup>

### *What space for non-state actors?*

Civil society organisations (CSOs) and farmers' organisations from the Global South have been critical of the outcomes of the Italian G7 Presidency, particularly of the Pescara meeting of G7 development ministers, for several reasons. First, on process, they lamented the limited transparency of the decision-making process, replicating a traditional weakness of previous presidencies,<sup>35</sup> as they were neither involved in official meetings nor consulted in the preparation and finalisation of key deliverables such as the Pescara Communiqué.<sup>36</sup> The Civil7, one of the official engagement groups of the G7 Presidency, was the main catalyser of these critics. Despite the fact that the presidency organised a few informal channels of communication with the Civil7, there were very limited public or closed-door interactions with key ministries in designing and preparing the deliverables agreed in Apulia (G7 Summit), Siracusa (G7 Agriculture) and Pescara (G7 Development). Such a lack of involvement of the official engagement groups (e.g. Civil7 or Think7) has unfortunately turned into a structural issue besetting G7 Presidencies.<sup>37</sup> Among the reasons, there is the very compressed and limited timing between the start of the Presidency and the Leaders' summit, that usually takes place before summer, making it very difficult for the official engagement groups to have an impact on drafting the Communiqués. In addition, there persists a misalignment between the official political agenda and the one followed by the different engagement groups, which reduces their chances to take part in key preparatory processes and make concrete proposals to the G7 sherpas.<sup>38</sup>

On substance, several farmers organisations and CSOs from the Civil7 warned that the various initiatives were designed merely to support the geo-political and economic interests of the G7 countries and their corporations investing in the

<sup>33</sup> Marcos Chamon et al., "Debt-for-climate Swaps: Analysis, Design, and Implementation", in *IMF Working Papers*, No. 22/162 (August 2022), <https://doi.org/10.5089/9798400215872.001>.

<sup>34</sup> WFP Debt Swap Task Force, *Debt-for-food Swaps*, September 2021, [http://web.archive.org/web/20230625100559/https://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/WFP\\_SUN-Debt-for-food-Swaps-Presentation.pdf](http://web.archive.org/web/20230625100559/https://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/WFP_SUN-Debt-for-food-Swaps-Presentation.pdf).

<sup>35</sup> Cristiana De Lia, "The G7 Food Systems Initiative: New Opportunities for African Family Farmers", in *ECCO Climate*, 6 June 2024, <https://eccoclimate.org/?p=8488>.

<sup>36</sup> Interview, 20 November 2024.

<sup>37</sup> Interview, 24 October 2024.

<sup>38</sup> Interview, 14 February 2025.

Global South.<sup>39</sup> It is not a coincidence that the Pescara Communiqué mentioned “civil society” and local communities only four and twenty times respectively, whereas the private sector is mentioned 29 times.<sup>40</sup> The risk is that the G7 replicates the model of the 1970s, when massive public investment in infrastructure allowed big private companies to get privileged access to the market.<sup>41</sup> Concerns over the privatisation of public services in the Global South are not limited to the G7 food security-related deliverables but also to the G7 Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) or other key global projects involving several G7 members, such as the EU’s Global Gateway,<sup>42</sup> and even Italy’s Mattei Plan for Africa.<sup>43</sup> That is why for instance CSOs are asking for a full formal participation of local and indigenous communities in the next PGII Secretariat.<sup>44</sup> Finally, several CSOs complained that the Apulia Food Systems Initiative was not fully aligned with the agenda of the UN Committee on World Food Security, the leading international, multi-actor and intergovernmental policy platform on food security and nutrition, which can ensure quality analysis, independence and democratic participation in decision-making processes on food systems. This misalignment can generate a more fragmented food governance.<sup>45</sup>

## Conclusions

The G7 is a crucial platform to address global development issues. Despite producing non-binding decisions, the G7 is a club of like-minded partners that can more easily mobilise consensus and design financial solutions to tackle global hunger. However, the difficulty in matching political declarations with strong financial commitments shows that the implementation and scaling-up of existing initiatives should be prioritised over the launching of new deliverables. Moreover, since the G7 does not include any member from the Global South, it must work closely with other more representative fora like the G20. These settings are more legitimate places to negotiate global dossiers such as the reform of international finance institutions, despite being sometimes trapped in the geopolitical rivalries between very divergent interests among its members.

<sup>39</sup> Civil7, *C7 Statement ahead of the G7 Ministerial Meeting on Development*, cit.

<sup>40</sup> Interview, 31 October 2024.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Alexandra Gerasimcikova and Farwa Sial, *Who Profits from the Global Gateway? The EU’s New Strategy for Development Cooperation*, Brussels, Eurodad/Counter Balance/Oxfam, 2024, <https://www.oxfam.org/en/node/24887>; but also Paul Okumu and Daniele Fattibene, “The Global Gateway Three Years Later: An African Reality Check for the Next Commission”, in *ETTg Blogs*, 23 September 2024, <https://ettg.eu/?p=9220>.

<sup>43</sup> The Mattei Plan it has received a certain amount of criticism from Italian civil society in the past months. See AOI, *Nuovo Partenariato con l’Africa e Piano Mattei per l’Africa*, September 2024, [https://www.info-cooperazione.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/AOI\\_NPA\\_PianoMattei-3ott24\\_finale.pdf](https://www.info-cooperazione.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/AOI_NPA_PianoMattei-3ott24_finale.pdf).

<sup>44</sup> Interview, 31 October 2024.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

For this reason, Italy's efforts to facilitate engagement and synergies with G20 members were commendable. This is an important lesson that the Canadian Presidency should learn and build upon. There are reasons to be optimistic about this in spite of Canada being very much concentrated on the federal elections scheduled for this spring. Canada has always held Development Ministerial meetings during its G7 Presidencies<sup>46</sup> and strongly supported the fight against global poverty and hunger, as was shown by the Charlevoix Declaration.<sup>47</sup> In addition, the fight against climate change, the clean energy transformation and gender equality were at the core of Canada's priorities for the G7 and G20 summits. Finally, recognising the public's need for greater transparency and accountability, it is likely that Canada will devote strong attention to reporting on the progress of various G7 food-security-related actions, to showcase and communicate concrete results on commitments to promote global prosperity and sustainability.

Overall, it will be crucial to establish a solid triangular cooperation with South Africa and Brazil, to make sure that G7, G20 and COP efforts are fully aligned. This synergy is pivotal to bring the voice of the Global South on board (particularly from Africa), to scale up the efforts made by some agencies like the African Union Development Agency NEPAD or to support other key projects on infrastructural connections in synergy with the EU's Global Gateway (e.g., the Lobito corridor). There are already very good examples of successful G7-G20 coordination such as the Just Energy Transition Partnerships, the multilateral platforms designed to deliver climate finance in low and middle income countries to accelerate their decarbonisation plans.<sup>48</sup> In addition, the G7 and G20 should try to coordinate efforts on several upcoming key policy processes, such as the Finance in Commons Summit, the Nutrition for Growth Summit and the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in summer 2025.

On food and nutrition security, the UN's Rome-based development agencies – FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and WFP – should play a central coordination role. In this context, the 2nd United Nations Food Systems Summit Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+4), taking place in Addis Ababa and co-hosted by Ethiopia and Italy, will also be essential to monitor the results achieved so far. Since the Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils and the G20 Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty are to be hosted at FAO and IFAD, the Rome-based agencies can serve as key multi-stakeholder platforms<sup>49</sup> that can facilitate dialogue

<sup>46</sup> John Kirton, *Connecting G7 Development Performance from Apulia 2024 with Kananaskis 2025*, presentation, Rome, 31 October 2024, <https://g7.utoronto.ca/evaluations/2024apulia/kirton-development-iai.html>.

<sup>47</sup> G7, *Charlevoix Declaration on Quality Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls and Women in Developing Countries*, La Malbaie, Quebec, 9 June 2018, <https://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2018charlevoix/education-commitment.html>.

<sup>48</sup> Tokelo Shai, "What Are JETPs? (Just Energy Transition Partnerships)", in *IHRB Analysis*, 6 November 2024, <https://www.ihrb.org/resources/what-are-jetps-just-energy-transition-partnerships>.

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and ensure policy coherence and coordination. These platforms can bring together international financial institutions, think tanks, the Italian government and the permanent missions of the countries of the Global South, to properly monitor the results of all the multilaterally designed projects.

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