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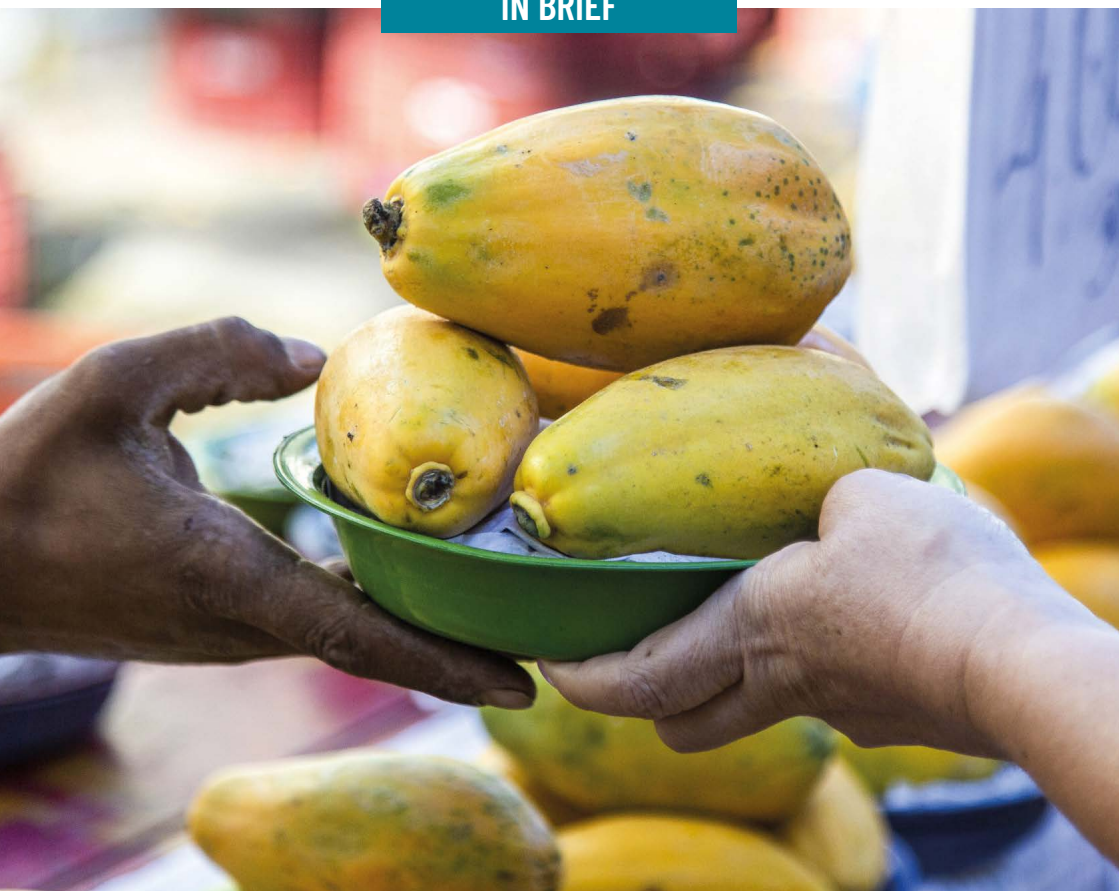
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A MULTI-BILLION-DOLLAR OPPORTUNITY

Repurposing agricultural support to transform food systems

IN BRIEF



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Current agricultural support policies are steering us away from achieving the SDGs and the goals of the Paris Agreement. But there is still time to repurpose agricultural support to drive a transformation towards healthier, more sustainable, equitable and efficient food systems	1
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KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ Agricultural support is not providing desirable results for sustainability and human health, but repurposing it can be a game changer. It offers governments an opportunity to optimize the use of scarce public resources to transform food systems in ways that make them not only more efficient, but also more supportive of the SDGs.
- ▶ Globally, support to agricultural producers currently accounts for almost USD 540 billion a year, or 15 percent of total agricultural production value. This support is heavily biased towards measures that are distorting (thus leading to inefficiency), unequally distributed, and harmful for the environment and human health. Under a continuation of current trends, this support could reach almost USD 1.8 trillion in 2030.
- ▶ Phasing out the most distorting and environmentally and socially harmful producer support (i.e. price incentives and fiscal subsidies tied to the production of a specific commodity) is essential, but this will not bear fruit if resources are not redirected towards investments for the provision of public goods and services for agriculture (i.e. research and development and infrastructure) and to decoupled fiscal subsidies.
- ▶ Any repurposing strategy is dependent on a range of factors and country-specific circumstances, involving policymakers and all relevant stakeholders through public outreach and communication strategies to ensure buy-in and policy coherence across all food systems components. This includes measures to mitigate negative short-term impacts especially for the most vulnerable groups, including smallholder farmers, many of whom are women.

- ▶ Six steps governments may follow to develop and implement a repurposing strategy include: estimating the support already provided; identifying and estimating the impact of the support provided; designing the approach for repurposing agricultural producer support, including identifying needed reforms; estimating the future impact of the repurposing strategy; reviewing and refining the repurposing strategy, prior to implementation; and monitoring the outcomes of the new agricultural producer support.
- ▶ A few countries have begun repurposing and reforming agricultural support, but action needs to be broader, bolder and faster worldwide. The time has come for greater collaboration and cooperation across government, research institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to develop the evidence on which successful repurposing strategies can be built. The United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 and other subsequent forums present a momentous opportunity to spearhead action in this direction.

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