

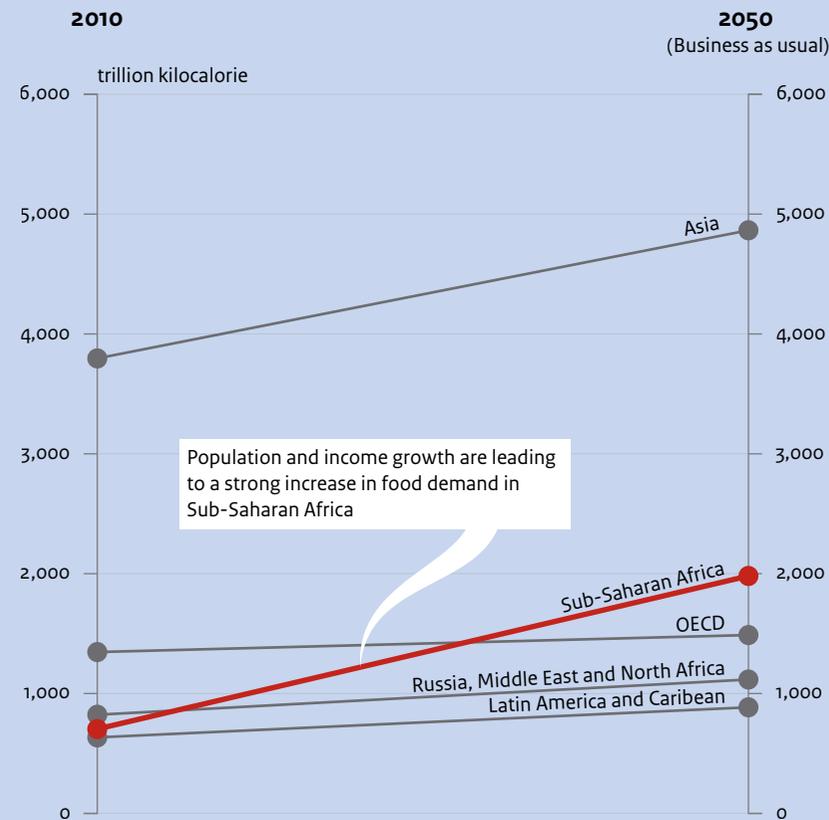
# Matching food demand...

Limiting cropland expansion by producing food more efficiently

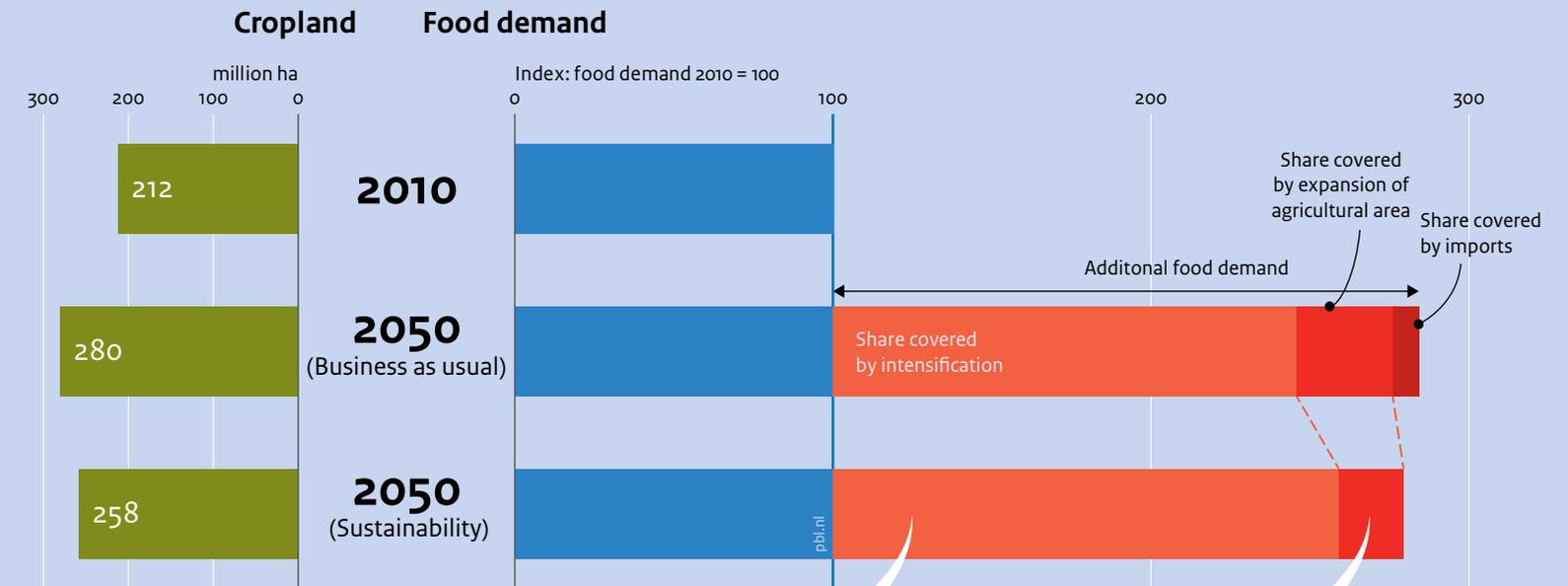
Sustainable Development Goal 2 aims to end world hunger. In the light of the staggering population growth expected for many African countries, the foreseeable increase in productivity will not be enough to meet the resulting food demand in 2050. Unlike the situation in most other regions, expansion of agricultural areas is urgently needed in Sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, SDG 15 aims to halt biodiversity loss, and the desire to meet both SDGs has triggered a heated debate on the trade-offs between them. One way to make these SDGs compatible is to limit further expansion and produce food in a more sustainable manner.

Between 1990 and 2010, the intensification of production practices and the rise in yields in particular were the main drivers of growth in domestic food production in Africa. Agricultural expansion played a minor role in the increases. To continue these positive developments into the future an integrated pathway that serves several SDGs by combining economic growth, reduction of inequality and conservation of natural areas. To end world hunger and simultaneously preserve natural areas, agricultural productivity needs to increase by using resources, such as fertilisers and land, more efficiently and reduce food losses along production and supply chains.

## Growing food demand



# ...and cropland availability in Sub-Saharan Africa



### Closing yield gaps

Closing yield gaps is the most straightforward avenue to increase the availability of calories. It refers to the production increase that is attainable when there are no pests or diseases and no limitations on fertiliser use.

### Expanding agricultural areas

Cropland expansion occurs mainly at the expense of natural areas. The depiction of Africa as a continent with an immense potential for agricultural expansion needs nuancing. The distribution of potentially available underutilised cropland is highly uneven across the continent. Most of it is located in large, sparsely populated countries (e.g. the Democratic Republic of the Congo), often characterised by weak governance and limited opportunities for economic development.