

SUN Movement Climate and Nutrition Advocacy Messages & Asks

Background messages

1. Climate change poses a significant threat to food and nutrition security, most acutely affecting low-income countries and the most vulnerable groups.

- The increasingly unpredictable weather patterns associated with climate change, including events like droughts and floods, affect each and every step of the food supply chain, from production to retail, thus reducing food accessibility and availability.
- Both climate shocks and elevated temperatures, a hallmark of climate change, can directly harm food production systems, affecting both producers' livelihoods (most often women) and consumers' access to quality food.¹
- Future projections paint a bleak picture of reduced nutrient availability, with vulnerable populations, especially women and children, bearing the brunt of the consequences, and threatening global health and socio-economic development.² The World Bank estimates that by the end of this decade, climate shocks alone could drive 132 million people into extreme poverty,³ exacerbating present and impending food and nutrition challenges.
- The climate crisis is also driving displacement and making life harder for those already forced to flee. Entire populations are already suffering the impacts of climate change, but vulnerable people living in some of the most fragile and conflict-affected countries are often disproportionately affected. From catastrophic flooding in Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and parts of the Sahel, to relentless drought and suffering in Afghanistan, Madagascar and the Horn of Africa, millions were displaced in 2022 alone.⁴
- As we address the critical issue of climate change, we must also recognize its profound impact on nutrition, not just in terms of greenhouse gas emissions from food systems but also the decreasing nutrient content in food and the escalating costs of fresh produce. To tackle this, COP processes, financing strategies, and national climate planning should

¹ Gitz, V., Meybeck, A., Lipper, L., Young, C. D., & Braatz, S. (2016). Climate change and food security: risks and responses. *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Report*, 110(2).

² Lloyd SJ, Kovats RS, Chalabi Z. 2011. Climate change, crop yields, and undernutrition: development of a model to quantify the impact of climate scenarios on child undernutrition. *Environ Health Perspect* 119(12):1817–1823.

³ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/climatechange/covid-climate-change-and-poverty-avoiding-worst-impacts>

⁴ According to UNHCR: <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/environment-disasters-and-climate-change/climate-change-and>

prioritize and promote local production of affordable fresh produce, while addressing the production, distribution, storage, and consumption patterns.

- The link between health and climate resilience is crucial. As climate change affects the food supply chain, it directly impacts nutrition and overall health. Beyond the healthcare sector, malnutrition influences labor productivity and human capital, especially among vulnerable groups. An integrated approach is essential, emphasizing sustainable dietary choices, breastfeeding support, and a focus on local, fresh foods. Addressing these intersections holistically can lead to healthier and more resilient populations in the face of the climate crisis.

2. **Science shows a clear synergy between undernutrition, obesity, and climate change.**

- Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is projected to result in an additional 250,000 deaths annually⁵ and an increase of 25 million undernourished children due to its impacts.⁶
- Child stunting rates are expected to rise significantly due to climate change, with dire consequences for human capital development, labor productivity and economic development.⁷ For example, in West Africa, a 2°C rise in temperature is expected to increase the prevalence of stunting by 7.4%.⁸
- Moreover, research shows a direct link between rising ambient temperatures and an elevated risk of preterm births and deliveries with low birth weight.⁹
- At the same time, climate change amplifies the risk of overweight, obesity, and diet-related non-communicable diseases. For instance, rising temperatures correlate with decreased physical activity, especially in urban areas. Additionally, climate-driven migration boosts urbanization, leading to increased access to energy-rich, highly processed foods.¹⁰
- Elevated CO₂ could cause an additional 175 million people to be zinc deficient. More than 1 billion women and children could lose much of their dietary iron intake, putting them at greater risk of anemia and other diseases.¹¹

⁵ Source: WHO <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-and-health>

⁶ Source: IFPRI <https://www.ifpri.org/publication/climate-change-impact-agriculture-and-costs-adaptation>

⁷ Lloyd SJ, Kovats RS, Chalabi Z. 2011. Climate change, crop yields, and undernutrition: development of a model to quantify the impact of climate scenarios on child undernutrition. *Environ Health Perspect* 119(12):1817–1823, PMID: 21844000

⁸ https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0095069622000626?ref=pdf_download&fr=RR-2&rr=81e410c819483b58

⁹ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2767260>

¹⁰ <https://www.enonline.net/attachments/4215/Nutrition-and-Climate-Change-Current-State-of-Play-Scoping-Review.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-018-0253-3#citeas>

3. Nutrition also has a critical impact on climate change, with food systems being responsible for over one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions.¹²

- Agriculture, especially livestock, and land use changes are major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions as well as causing ecosystem disruption.
- Dietary habits influence both climate change and our nutritional well-being. Overconsumption of meat, the growing trend towards ultra-processed foods, and the common use of commercial milk formulas not only impact the environment through their production, packaging and distribution but also pose significant health and nutritional concerns.
- Approximately one-third of the food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted and is projected to rise. This loss and waste contributes to 8-10% of total human-caused greenhouse gas emissions.¹³ This not only impacts global and local food supplies but also intensifies the strain on our food system.

4. Climate finance mechanisms have yet to effectively address the challenge of ensuring universal access to healthy diets.

- A significant gap remains in our financing strategies. Between 2021 and 2022, a mere 3% of Green Climate Fund projects focused on nutrition-specific interventions. Similarly concerning, only 1% of climate-related Official Development Assistance funding specifically addresses nutrition.¹⁴
- agrifood subsidies and public support amount to over USD \$800 billion every year globally¹⁵. However, many of these subsidies have counterproductive effects. Redirecting current public support for food and agriculture to enhance the supply of nutritious foods can aid in making healthy diets more affordable and accessible.¹⁶

Advocacy asks

Proposed rallying call

Following COP28, we want to see a stronger concerted effort, backed by both public and private resources, dedicated to scaling up climate and nutrition actions as a comprehensive, integrated mission.

Asks

¹² <https://www.nature.com/articles/s43016-021-00225-9>

¹³ FAO, 2013b: Food Wastage Footprint. Impacts on Natural Resources. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, Italy, 63 pp.

¹⁴ I-CAN baseline paper : <https://www.fao.org/nutrition/climate-action-and-nutrition-at-cfs51/en/>

¹⁵ The Global Nutrition Report (2022). Nutrition Accountability Framework.

<https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/naf/>

¹⁶ 2023 SOFI report : <https://www.wfp.org/publications/state-food-security-and-nutrition-world-sofi-report-2023>

Ask#1: Healthy diets from sustainable food systems are pivotal in combating climate change and should be at the forefront of climate action.

- By addressing climate change and nutrition together, sustainable food systems not only promote optimal nutrition but also guarantee a resilient environment and decent livelihoods. By diversifying food production through climate-smart practices, we can leverage indigenous, nutrient-rich foods. This not only nurtures our soil and protects our water sources but also brings nutritious foods to our plates.
- In light of climate change, large-scale fortification and biofortification are smart investments. Every dollar spent yields a US\$27 return from better health and productivity.¹⁷ When paired with national dietary guidelines tailored to each country's distinct nutritional needs and cultural nuances, this strategy promotes the accessibility and affordability of healthy diets.
- By refining post-harvest management and storage methods, we can ensure steady food supplies, particularly when facing climate challenges, reinforcing availability of fresh food which if accompanied by the right behavioural choices could improve nutrition.
- While climate change significantly disrupts nutrition through its adverse effects on the food supply chain and food quality, improving nutrition is a powerful tool for enhancing resilience to climate-induced heat stress. Early interventions to boost nutritional status can equip the body to better cope with the stresses brought on by climate change.

Ask #2: Climate finance must be unlocked to support the transition towards nutritious food systems.

- The economic implications of malnutrition are staggering, with undernutrition leading to an annual productivity loss of US\$3 trillion, and obesity-related costs reaching US\$2 trillion globally.¹⁸ Prioritizing nutrition through a climate lens can foster healthier, more resilient populations and stronger, more productive human capital especially in low and middle-income countries.

Ask #3: We need to factor nutrition into our climate action plans across all sectors. This includes:

- **Nutrition in primary health care:** Within primary health care, focus on essential nutrition interventions during the first 1000 days: prenatal vitamins, Vitamin A supplementation, promotion of exclusive breastfeeding, complementary foods after weaning and lipid-based nutritional supplements as well as the prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition. Ensure these services are available to those most vulnerable groups.

¹⁷<https://www.gatesfoundation.org/ideas/articles/food-fortification-to-fortify-the-future#:~:text=On%20a%20weighted%20average%20basis,earnings%2C%20and%20enhanced%20work%20productivity.>

¹⁸ Source: World Bank <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/nutrition/overview>

- **Water Management:** Optimize water practices for sustainable agriculture and food production: efficient irrigation, rainwater collection, and watershed care. Make sure women and girls are engaged and supported as part of these processes.
- **Nutrition-focused Social Protection:** Beyond calories, provide micronutrient supplements, fortified foods, and specialized diet options for at-risk groups. Ensure access to healthy diets, especially for those groups most likely to face displacement during crises.
- **Data investment:** Establish early warning systems for climate threats and devise tools to evaluate climate-food-nutrition interactions comprehensively.
- **Inclusive climate strategies:** Ensure policies consider nutrition, gender, and youth. Recognize differing impacts of climate change on women, girls, and youth. Engage young voices in policy-making, fostering gender equality to bolster our climate and nutrition response.

Ask #4: We urge countries to prioritize the integration of both climate and nutrition considerations in their nutrition commitments.

- Nearly 44% of National Nutrition Plans incorporate specific climate actions. Yet, a staggering 95% of Nutrition for Growth commitments overlook climate or sustainability considerations. Furthermore, only 2% of Nationally Determined Contributions detail concrete measures to tackle nutrition issues.
- This disparity emphasizes how nutrition is not sufficiently considered in climate initiatives. We call on national nutrition and climate experts, alongside policymakers, to unite in devising strategies that address the complex overlap of climate change and nutrition. Furthermore, we call on organizations and institutions with the capacity to support the implementation of these strategies to intensify both their financial and technical support.
- ***As a movement we commit to ensuring that stakeholders better integrate climate and sustainability considerations as we support the development of and implementation of multi-stakeholder national nutrition plans.***