

TRANSFORMING FOOD SYSTEMS FOR PEOPLE, NATURE, AND CLIMATE: A SHARED CALL TO ACTION

Food is essential to life on earth. It is a fundamental human right, providing vital nutrients for health and wellbeing. It connects people to their families, communities, cultures, and the natural world. Food systems provide livelihoods for at least 4 billion people and are the socio-economic backbone of many communities and countries. We have an enormous opportunity to unlock the transformative benefits of food systems and safeguard food and nutrition security, build resilience to climate impacts, contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation, protect and restore nature and biodiversity, and create more inclusive, equitable, prosperous economies and societies.

Today, food systems face unprecedented and accelerating challenges. They contribute to and are affected by nature and biodiversity loss, climate change, land and soil degradation, humanitarian crises, and conflict. Global food and agriculture is responsible for more than one third of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions¹, up to 70 percent of freshwater use, and as much as 80 percent of biodiversity loss. Unsustainable food systems undermine food and nutrition security, increase risks of pest and pathogen outbreaks, and threaten the livelihoods of farmers and other frontline food systems actors². Many food environments make it difficult for consumers to access nutritious, affordable, diverse, locally- and sustainably-produced food. Poor diet quality is the leading driver of non-communicable diseases and the major cause of premature death around the world. Around 30 percent of food is lost or wasted³, over 900 million people are food insecure – many of whom work in agriculture – and over 3 billion cannot afford a healthy diet. The hidden social, economic, and environmental costs associated with today's food systems amount to more than US\$10 trillion annually.

This confluence of crises is an unparalleled global emergency, and we must act with appropriate urgency, effort, and scale. We, the undersigned Non-State Actors, share a vision that by 2030, food systems deliver significant, measurable progress for people, nature, and climate.

To achieve this 2030 vision, we will work to align the global food system with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the Sharm El Sheikh Adaptation Agenda, and the Breakthrough Agenda. We therefore need time-bound, aligned, holistic, global targets for food systems by COP29 at the latest, and actionable, evidence-based, locally appropriate food systems transition pathways. As Non-State Actors, as appropriate, we will translate these into our strategies and plans, set and deliver on science-based targets for climate, nature, and food systems, and transparently disclose and report progress, drawing on relevant best practice⁴.

According to these pathways and our respective roles and responsibilities, we will prioritize critical actions to:

1. Support frontline food systems actors to adapt and build resilience to climate risks, and other shocks and stresses;
2. Align food systems with the 1.5°C goal, reducing absolute GHG emissions from food systems (including emissions of carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide), and transitioning away from fossil fuel use within food systems whilst supporting renewable energy access, especially in developing countries;
3. Address rising hunger and ensure vulnerable individuals, households, communities, and fragile regions experiencing crisis levels of food insecurity can meet their nutritional needs, ending hunger and malnutrition in all its form, noting that climate change will further exacerbate these risks;
4. Change food environments to improve availability, accessibility, and affordability in support of healthy, nutritious, sustainable, and locally appropriate diets, transitioning to more diversified sources of protein and energy and more balanced diets in line with global goals and national circumstances;
5. Support a transition to and scaling up of sustainable approaches to food production that deliver positive outcomes for people, nature, and climate (including agroecology, organic, regenerative and nature-positive approaches and sustainable aquaculture) and climate resilient management of capture fisheries, pursuing co-benefits with animal welfare, air quality and public health;
6. Enhance water resilience, water quality, and availability through integrated management of water and food systems and restoration of water-related ecosystems;
7. Improve soil health through increased investments, expanded research, and scaling of healthy soil practices that increase soil carbon, prevent soil pollution, and reverse land degradation.

¹ Food systems, including agriculture and the energy use, waste, and industrial emissions related to them.

² This term is intended to be inclusive of farmers, farmworkers, fishers, pastoralists, ranchers, aquaculturists, forest-dependent people, food value chain workers, Indigenous Peoples, youth, women, and other people in vulnerable situations on the frontline of the food economy.

³ Around 14 percent of this is lost and a further 17% wasted.

⁴ For large corporates and financial institutions, this includes scopes 1, 2 and 3 GHG emissions, through third party target setting, disclosure, and reporting frameworks and initiatives such as CDP, ISSB, Race to Zero, SBTi FLAG, SBTN, TCFD, and TNFD, updating with best practice and supporting convergence.

8. Protect, conserve, and restore nature and biodiversity, including by halting and reversing loss of forests and other important ecosystems such as wetlands, grasslands, savannahs, and peatlands, contributing significantly to the restoration of degraded land and grazing pastures;
9. Intensify efforts to halve food loss and waste, including through circular economy approaches;
10. Reorient, align, de-risk, and scale-up finance, including multilateral, private, philanthropic, and blended finance, to promote food systems adaptation and resilience, as well as mitigation, closing the finance gap with particular attention towards the adaptation needs of low-income countries and increasing direct access for frontline food system actors.

In implementing a collective food systems transformation agenda, we will:

1. Centre our efforts on frontline food systems actors, with a particular focus on women and youth, to ensure they have voice and agency in decision-making, and to support, acknowledge, and reward their efforts in feeding the world while respecting planetary boundaries and managing ecosystems;
2. Promote a just transition, including by advancing equitable livelihoods and meaningfully engaging stakeholders and rightsholders in processes and plans that affect them, and addressing land and resource tenure for marginalized groups;
3. Respect the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, including their rights to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent, land, and self-determination, recognizing the leading role they play in the production of sustainable food systems;
4. Promote multi stakeholder collaboration and opportunities for learning, exchange and coordination between Non-State Actors and with Governments at all levels.

National Governments play a vital role in food systems transformation, including creating the enabling conditions that can accelerate Non-State Actor contributions and therefore the achievement of the vision we have set forth. We welcome the Emirates Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action, and stand ready to support its ambitious implementation. We call for all Governments to strengthen their Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDCs) by 2025. We highlight the significant need and opportunity for Governments to reorient agricultural policies, redirect subsidies away from harmful practices and repurpose public support, address trade, finance and regulatory barriers, and introduce mandatory climate- and nature-related risk disclosure. This will help drive further ambition, level the playing field, create incentives, promote innovation and research, and drive the investments needed for food systems transformation. We call on Governments to meaningfully engage frontline food systems actors, cities, consumers, landscape-level initiatives and all other relevant stakeholders as they develop and update their National Food Systems Pathways and long-term climate strategies, informed by best-available science and evidence, and integrate actions for sustainable food systems into NDCs, National Adaptation Plans, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, National Nutrition Plans and National Food-Based Dietary Guidelines.

We commit to and we call on all State and Non-State Actors to respect and value the Traditional Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and the local knowledge of farmers, fishers, ranchers, and pastoralists, highlighting in particular the role of women and youth. We must strengthen the capacity of the organizations that represent frontline food systems actors, to enable their meaningful engagement in climate negotiations and other relevant processes that affect them, and to co-design locally tailored tools, incentives, and technical support. We call for appropriate provision to be made for Loss and Damage to support vulnerable communities as they adapt to and recover from climate impacts. We recognize the need to address power imbalances and societal inequality, and to provide fair incomes and wages to all food systems workers. We call for increased access to climate risk insurance, grants, and other forms of support as appropriate and for significant investment in physical infrastructure and socially inclusive technologies governed by regulatory frameworks that protect the public interest so that current and future generations of frontline food system actors thrive and prosper as they produce food and steward natural resources.

We, the undersigned Non-State Actors, represent frontline food systems actors as well as businesses, consumers, cities, civil society, educators, investors, multilateral institutions, regional governments, research agencies, universities, and more. We recognize this is a multi-stakeholder effort, and we have varied roles and shared responsibilities in the achievement of a just food systems transition. The burden of this transition should not fall disproportionately on low-income countries, communities, and population groups. We commit to monitor and report annually on our efforts to progress these food systems transformation priorities and other impact areas through to 2030. We are ready to work in partnership with Governments as well as each other. Together, we can collaborate in leading an ambitious, shared agenda that unlocks the potential of food systems as one of the main solutions for people, nature, and climate.