

17. Invites Parties and observers to submit by 27 March 2023 via the submission portals views on the elements of the joint work referred to in paragraphs 14–15 above, including views on topics for the workshops referred to in paragraph 15(b) above, for consideration by the subsidiary bodies at their fifty-eighth sessions (June 2023);

This submission outlines the views of the World Health Organization (WHO) in response to the [Decision -/CP.27](#) on the Joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security (paragraph 17) to share views on the elements of the joint work including views on topics for workshops for consideration by the subsidiary bodies at the fifty-eighth sessions (June 2023).

Food systems are complex and multidimensional webs of activities, resources and actors involving the production, processing, handling, preparation, storage, distribution, marketing, access, purchase, consumption, and loss and waste of food, and the outputs of these activities, including social, economic and environmental outcomes.

Food systems contribute up to one-third of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, account for 80% of biodiversity loss and up to 70% of freshwater consumption¹². The greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from food systems could, on their own, preclude achieving the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to below 2°C, aiming for 1.5°C³. UNEP, in its Emissions Gap report of 2022⁴ is clear: transforming food systems is imperative for avoiding dangerous levels of climate change and other environmental problems as well as essential for ensuring healthy diets and food security for all.

Food consumption drives food production and is the main interface between human society and the environment⁵. Certain types of food production and/or agricultural practices result in land conversion, biodiversity loss and contamination of land, freshwater and coastal ecosystems. They also strongly contribute to local air and water pollution and soil degradation. Some dietary choices drive production systems that result in higher GHG emissions. Food has been described as the “single strongest lever to optimize human health and environmental sustainability on Earth”⁶. Dietary choices steer different production systems and result in varied emissions and environmental footprints.

So not only what we produce but also what we eat has an effect on climate change.

WHO supports the Committee on World Food Security’s (CFS) Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition⁷ which state that “Sustainable food systems are food systems that enable food safety, food security and

¹ IPCC, 2019: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems* [P.R. Shukla, J. Skea, E. Calvo Buendia, V. Masson-Delmotte, H.- O. Pörtner, D. C. Roberts, P. Zhai, R. Slade, S. Connors, R. van Diemen, M. Ferrat, E. Haughey, S. Luz, S. Neogi, M. Pathak, J. Petzold, J. Portugal Pereira, P. Vyas, E. Huntley, K. Kissick, M. Belkacemi, J. Malley, (eds.)].

<https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/chapter/summary-for-policymakers/>

² UN Secretary-General’s Chair Summary and Statement of Action on the UN Food Systems Summit

<https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/news/making-food-systems-work-people-planet-and-prosperity>

³ Clark, M.A., Domingo, N.G.G., Colgan, K., Thakrar, S.K., Tilman, D., Lynch, J. et al. (2020). Global food system emissions could preclude achieving the 1.5° and 2°C climate change targets. *Science* 370(6517), 705–708.

<https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aba7357>

⁴ United Nations Environment Programme (2022). Emissions Gap Report 2022: The Closing Window — Climate crisis calls for rapid transformation of societies. Nairobi. <https://www.unep.org/emissions-gap-report-2022>
<https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2022>

⁵ Rockström J., Edenhofer O., Gaertner J., DeClerck F. Planet-proofing the global food system. *Nature Food* 1, 3-5, 2020.

⁶ Food, planet health: Healthy diets from sustainable food systems — Summary report of the EAT-Lancet Commission [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)31788-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)31788-4/fulltext)

⁷ Committee on World Food Security and Nutrition (CFS) (2021). CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition. CFS, Rome

nutrition for current and future generations in accordance with the three dimensions (economic, social and environmental) of sustainable development”. The CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, adopted in 2021, also state that agriculture, food production and consumption influenced by, among others consumer behaviour and food environments, contribute to the total of greenhouse gases and other environmental impacts, including on water quality, quantity and availability and biodiversity. On the other hand, agricultural and forestry activities of sustainable food systems can contribute to the sequestration of carbon in the soil and to the maintenance of healthy ecosystems and biodiversity.

Climate change, agriculture, food systems, diets and nutrition are all interrelated in a bi-directional way. This implies that the impacts of climate change threaten all dimensions of global food security and nutrition as well as food quantity, quality, safety and ultimately food prices, with significant implications for the availability of and access to healthy diets.

The six dimensions of food security (availability, access, utilization, stability, agency, and sustainability)⁸ are interconnected and need to be fulfilled to ensure that all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

The recently published IPCC report⁹ recognized with very high confidence that human health will benefit from integrated mitigation and adaptation options that mainstreaming health into food policies and with high confidence that adaptation strategies which reduce food loss and waste or support balanced, sustainable healthy diets contribute to nutrition, health, biodiversity and other environmental benefits. This report also recognized with very high confidence that the occurrence of climate-related food-borne and water-borne diseases has increased. The incidence of vector-borne diseases has increased from range expansion and/or increased reproduction of disease vectors (high confidence). Animal and human diseases, including zoonoses, are emerging in new areas with high confidence. The 2021 G20 Health Ministers Matera Declaration¹⁰ clearly states that “linkages between human and animal health, the effects across One Health related to antimicrobial resistance (AMR), food systems, and environmental health, including climate change, ecosystem degradation, increased encroachment into natural systems and loss of biodiversity should be addressed through the One Health approach.”

In view of the above stated arguments, WHO therefore recommends for the Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security, to widen its scope of work and focus on food systems in its entirety and on food security in its six dimensions. WHO further encourages the Sharm el-Sheikh joint work to consider the One Health Approach as key to advance the nexus work on transforming food systems towards more sustainable, safer and healthier food systems for people and planet. WHO is aligned with UNEP stating that the adoption of a food systems lens can help in identifying the synergies and trade-offs across the various interconnected environmental, health and economic impacts as food systems include pre- and post-production processes, which are related to the transportation, industrial activities, storage and consumption of food.

WHO contribution:

WHO puts health at the center of food systems¹¹ and is promoting the implementation of a package of game-changing food systems actions, that complement each other and focus on not only improving the nutritional quality of food along the supply chain but also on creating healthier and more sustainable food environments.

https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs2021/Documents/CFS_VGs_Food_Systems_and_Nutrition_Strategy_EN.pdf

⁸ HLPE. 2020. Food security and nutrition: building a global narrative towards 2030. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome.

<https://www.fao.org/3/ca9731en/ca9731en.pdf>

⁹ IPCC (2023). Synthesis report of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6)

https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6syr/pdf/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf

¹⁰ https://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C_17_pagineAree_5459_8_file.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.who.int/initiatives/food-systems-for-health>

Egypt, as COP27 Presidency, in partnership with WHO, FAO, and other UN Agencies and partners have developed the global flagship Initiative on Climate Action and Nutrition (I-CAN) that will help foster collaboration to accelerate transformative action to address the critical nexus of climate change and nutrition, ultimately supporting the work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security.

WHO is also an active founding member of the Coalition of Action for Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for all, established in follow up of the UN Food Systems Summit. The coalition is advancing action to promote healthy and sustainable diets by supporting Member States to develop food-based dietary guidelines that consider environmental sustainability and by incorporating a food systems approach in the Nationally Determined Contributions, among others.

WHO, as Co-Chair of the United Nations Food Systems Task Force, supports the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub in enhancing coordination and synergies in the work that the UN is supporting with regards to the transformation of food systems as called for by the UN Secretary-General in his Statement of Action. The integration of food systems actions within the climate adaptation and climate mitigation discourse is an opportunity not to be missed.

WHO continues promoting the Committee on World Food Security Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition that recognizes the interconnectedness of climate change, agriculture, food systems, diets and nutrition.

WHO is a member of the One Health Quadripartite along with the Food and Agriculture Organization, World Organisation for Animal Health and United Nations Environment Programme. The 4 organizations work together to promote multisectoral responses to public health threats originating in the animal-human-environment interface and to provide technical advice on how to reduce these risks. The One Health approach focuses on food safety, control of zoonotic diseases, laboratory services, neglected tropical diseases, environmental health and antimicrobial resistance.

WHO is available to technically support workshops referred to in paragraph 15(b) in any of the above-mentioned items