

Joint Submission to UNFCCC on the SJWA Workshop Topic 1: Systemic and Holistic Approaches to Climate Action in Agriculture and Food Systems

Objective: This submission aims to **provide suggestions to the Parties and the Secretariat on the structure, format, subtopics and relevant speakers for the SJWA Workshop Topic 1: Systemic and Holistic Approaches to Climate Action on Agriculture, Food Systems and Food Security.**

1. The Case for Systemic and Holistic Approaches

We welcome the first workshop of the Sharm El-Sheikh joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security as it considers the topic of *Systemic and Holistic Approaches to Climate Action on Agriculture, Food Systems and Food Security*.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) considers food systems to include activities from production through consumption and waste, as well as the interactions between these activities.¹ The IPCC also notes that, within food systems, “mitigation actions need to go beyond food producers and suppliers to incorporate dietary changes and consumers’ behavioural patterns.”² In line with this, the upcoming workshop should consider climate action across all stages of the food system, from production through consumption, as well as the potential for both mitigation and adaptation benefits.

In addition to stressing the critical need for food systems transformation to mitigate and adapt to climate change, the IPCC highlights the linkages between food production, environmental health, and human well-being.³ Therefore, systemic and holistic approaches to climate action must step beyond sectoral, single-target interventions and instead deliver integrated, systemic, holistic and comprehensive solutions that consider environmental and socio-economic dimensions of food systems transformation, unlock multiple co-benefits and support synergies across climate, biodiversity and health protection.

2 . Recommendations for workshop format

To maximize impact, the workshop should take an action-oriented approach, enabling participants to take note of successful policy actions and measures that countries can integrate into their national strategies, NDCs, and NAPs to accelerate climate action in agriculture, food systems, and food security.

¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), “Food Security,” 442, 479.

² IPCC, “Cross-Sectoral Perspectives,” 1279–80.

³ IPCC, 2022: Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 3056, doi:10.1017/9781009325844.



We propose that the workshop format include:

- **A World Café** with broad and inclusive participation for all registered representatives of accredited observer organizations, including civil society organizations and experts, to actively participate, modeled after the World Café structure used in the GST Technical Dialogues. The aim of the World Café would be to 1) enable the sharing of knowledge and information on developing and implementing policies, plans, and strategies that have been effective in transforming food systems; and 2) promote collaboration and partnership among national, regional and international organizations and other relevant stakeholders.

The World Café should include stations with facilitated, interactive discussions focused on specific subtopics (*see proposed subtopics below*). Each station should have a minimum of two expert facilitators who should capture key messages from the discussions for input into the workshop report. Participation in the World Café should be open to both Parties and non-Party stakeholders, and participants should have the opportunity to rotate between multiple stations to share views and experiences.

- **Roundtables** with Party and expert presentations exploring subtopics (*see proposed subtopics below*) followed by interactive discussions. Roundtables should focus on opportunities for accessing means of implementation and should serve to strengthen synergies across relevant UNFCCC workstreams, such as the upcoming Forum of the Standing Committee on Finance, which this year will be considering “Accelerating climate action and resilience through financing for sustainable food systems and agriculture.”

Roundtables would begin with expert presentations to provide technical and scientific background and case study presentations providing examples of implementation. Following the presentations, participants will be invited to engage in an interactive discussion to share reflections and views. Key messages from both the presentations and discussions should be captured for the workshop report.

- **Expected Outcomes:** The workshop report should include messages from both the World Café and Roundtables (from presentations and the interactive discussion) and should include key messages from both Party and non-Party stakeholders.

The workshop should emphasize key insights and actionable recommendations to be incorporated into the final report. Furthermore, we encourage Parties to explore policies, actions, and measures aimed at integrating food systems into national frameworks (such as NDCs, NAPs, NBSAPs, and LDNs) and collective commitments (including potential outcomes from COP30).

3. Proposed Subtopics for Workshop 1

We propose the following three subtopics for Workshop 1:

(A) Sustainable Diets & Enabling Food Environments

Shifting to plant-rich diets reduces emissions, alleviates pressure on land and oceans, and strengthens climate resilience and food security. Reducing reliance on animal products frees land for ecosystem restoration and mitigates biodiversity loss, pollution, and overfishing.

For this transition to be effective and equitable, policies must create enabling food environments that make sustainable choices accessible and affordable. Key policy measures that could be discussed include:

- Public awareness campaigns to educate consumers about the environmental impact of food choices and promote plant-rich diets.
- Developing enabling food environments through labelling schemes, advertising regulations, and public procurement policies to make sustainable food choices more accessible.
- Updating national dietary guidelines to emphasize the health and environmental benefits of sustainable diets.
- Introducing school and institutional programs that serve plant-based meals in line with planetary boundaries.
- Establishing public procurement policies requiring institutions to include plant-based and alternative protein options in menus.
- Using fiscal incentives such as VAT reduction on plant-based foods (fruits, vegetables, legumes) to make sustainable choices more affordable.

Suggested speakers:

- Dr Cleo Verkuil, Senior Scientist Climate & One Health Policy, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)
- Dr Marco Springmann, Senior Researcher on Environment and Health, Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford
- Rune-Christoffer Dragsdahl, Secretary-General at Vegetarian Society of Denmark & Deputy Chair at International Vegetarian Union
- Aline Martins de Carvalho, PhD in Public Health and professor of the University of Sao Paulo

(B) Cities and Urban Food Systems

Cities and local governments are vital actors in both climate action and food systems transformation. Cities and urban areas already account for an estimated 70% of global emissions,⁴ and it is projected that, by 2050, 80% of food globally will be consumed in cities.⁵

⁴ Shuaib Lwasa et al., *Urban Systems And Other Settlements*, (Carolina B.S. Dubeux & Diana Urge-Vorsatz eds., 2022), IPCC WGIII Chapter 8 at p. 877 (2022), https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_Chapter08.pdf.

⁵ Ellen MacArthur Foundation, *Cities And Circular Economy For Food*, at p.4 (2019), <https://emf.thirdlight.com/file/24/K6LOnlrKMZq-8vK6HoTK6iyBra/Cities%20and%20circular%20economy%20for%20food.pdf>.



C40, a global network of cities committed to climate action, has found that “food is the biggest source of consumption-based GHG emissions in cities (13-20%) – largely owing to diets rich in animal products.”⁶

Urban growth is deeply interconnected with food systems and their transformation opportunities. Because urbanization gives rise to income growth, it is associated with dietary shifts towards increased consumption of animal source foods and increased demand for livestock products.⁷ It also leads to changes in land use that affect agriculture, and cities channel important finance, inputs, information, services, and off-farm employment opportunities to rural areas.⁸

Existing initiatives on urban food systems and climate action offer valuable case studies for discussion, including [C40 Good Food Cities Accelerator](#), [Cool Food Pledge](#), and [Food Action Cities](#).

Suggested speakers:

- Zachary Tofias, Director of Food and Waste, C40 Cities
- Edwina Hughes, Head of Cool Food Pledge, WRI
- Rachel Atcheson, Executive Director, Food Policy Pathways
- Gisele Bortolini, General Coordinator of the Healthy Eating program of the Social Development Ministry of Brazil
- City of Belém, Brazil, Secretaria de Educação
- City of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Secretaria de Educação

(C) Integrated Approaches to Governance and Implementation

While solutions and measures to transform food systems need to be context-specific, pathways to achieve low-carbon and climate resilient food systems require integrated approaches to governance and implementation. Food systems cut across environmental, health and socio-economic dimensions and impact multiple sectors, such as agriculture, health, trade, finance, technology and innovation. Cross-departmental collaboration among ministries, government departments, and public agencies is critical for developing and delivering holistic approaches to address these challenges, ensure policy coherence and maximise co-benefits while minimizing potential trade-offs.

⁶ C40 CITIES, Good Food Cities Accelerator: How cities are achieving the planetary health diet for all (2023), https://www.c40.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/C40_Good_Food_Cities_Accelerator_Progress_Report_2023.pdf.

⁷ Assem Abu Hatab et al., *Urban Sprawl, Food Security And Agricultural Systems In Developing Countries: A Systematic Review Of The Literature*, SCIENTEDIRECT (2019), Vol 94, 129-142 at p.138, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0264275118310485>.

⁸ Sophie de Bruin, Dengerink and van Vliet 2021, *Urbanisation As Driver Of Food System Transformation And Opportunities For Rural Livelihoods*, FOOD SECURITY 13 (2021), 781-798, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12571-021-01182-8#citeas>. See also Coulibaly et al., *World Development Report 2009: Reshaping Economic Geography*, (Bruce ed.), THE WORLD BANK (2009) <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/730971468139804495/pdf/437380REVISED01BLIC1097808213760720.pdf>.

Recognising these inherent complexities, countries are increasingly emphasising the need for coordinated and integrated governance approaches to transform food systems. Workshop participants should be encouraged to consider what governance frameworks and processes are needed to support a food systems transformation that is inclusive and sustainable in the long term. Multisectoral governance structures led by high-level government focal points and comprising various ministries with active private sector and civil society engagement, are one example to consider. By connecting Ministries, food growers and farmers, especially small-scale farmers, and civil society actors, these structures should facilitate the design and implementation of community-based projects that address local conditions and needs.

Suggested speakers:

- Peter Umunay, Food Systems Integrated Program, Global Environment Facility (GEF)
- Gisele Bortolini, General Coordinator of the Healthy Eating program of the Social Development Ministry of Brazil
- Rachel Atcheson, Executive Director, Food Policy Pathways
- Najla Souza, Director of Institutional Relations, Brazilian Institute for Beans and Pulses (IBRAFE) OR Lara Gilmour, Director of Policy and Sustainability, Global Pulse Confederation (GPC)

4. Conclusion and Call to Action

The upcoming workshop presents an opportunity to accelerate climate action including all stages of the food system, from production through consumption. Given the interconnected challenges of climate change, food security, and environmental sustainability, solutions need to go beyond isolated interventions, integrating mitigation, adaptation, and socio-economic resilience.

We suggest that Parties and the UNFCCC Secretariat design the workshop to promote practical, action-oriented dialogue that equips stakeholders with actionable insights and proven strategies. The workshop can drive collaboration and innovation by incorporating diverse perspectives from both Party and non-Party stakeholders, paving the way for policies and measures that accelerate progress toward the Paris Agreement targets.

The workshop's outcomes should emphasize the importance of:

- **Incorporating food systems transformation into national and global climate frameworks:** Encourage Parties to integrate systemic food systems approaches into NDCs, NAPs, NBSAPs, LDNs, and other national strategies.
- **Strengthening cross-sectoral governance and implementation:** Promote collaboration among ministries, government agencies, and stakeholders to ensure coherent, effective climate action.



- **Promoting sustainable diets and urban food systems:** Highlight the role of plant-rich diets and city-led initiatives in reducing emissions, enhancing food security, and supporting resilient communities.

Collective action and science-driven solutions allow stakeholders worldwide to implement food systems measures that address climate change, strengthen adaptation, and promote long-term sustainability.

5. F&C AG brief summary:

The Food & Climate Action Group is a coalition of 25+ international NGOs advocating for food system transformation within the UNFCCC. Our mission is to drive long-term systemic change in food consumption and production, reducing reliance on animal-centric systems to meet the Paris Agreement targets. By promoting plant-rich, healthy, and affordable diets, along with sustainable, resilient agricultural practices that support small-scale farmers and local communities, we aim to unlock the benefits of sustainable food systems for both mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

For any queries, please contact the co-leads of the SSJW subgroup: Stephanie Cabovianco s.cabovianco@gmail.com and David Garrahy davidgarrahy@worldanimalprotection.org, or the Action Group co-chairs: Amelia Linn, amelial@mercyforanimals.org and Stephanie Maw, stephanie.maw@proveg.org.

Further details about the Action Group's mission and past submissions, policy briefings and statements relating to our UNFCCC advocacy work can be found here:

<https://www.foodandclimateaction.org/>.

This submission has been endorsed by the organizations listed below:

- A Well-Fed World
- Brighter Green
- Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation
- Chilis on Wheels
- Compassion in World Farming
- Global Youth Coalition
- Good Food Institute Brazil
- Mercy For Animals
- ProVeg International
- Real Food Systems Youth Network
- The Save Movement
- World Food Forum Argentina

