

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 55th SESSION

Interactive Dialogue with the with the High Commissioner on Climate Change

14 March 2024

In this interactive dialogue on the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on *measures for minimizing the adverse impact of climate change on the full realization of the right to food* ([A/HRC/55/37](#)), Deputy High Commissioner Ms. Nada Al-Nashif, presenting the report, reminded that the world has the capacity to feed everyone yet, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization, more than **783 million people suffered chronic hunger in 2022**, or 9% of the world population. **Food insecurity affects 333 million people**, a 200 million increase from pre-pandemic levels.

She highlighted that while climate change is a driver of migration, research found that building climate resilience including through **social protection systems** can reduce the risk of forced displacement.

Just land distribution systems that recognize the rights of indigenous peoples, peasants and the poor also need to be established.

The Deputy High Commissioner also recalled the [COP28 Global stock take](#) with acknowledges the “fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse impacts of climate change”. The report outlines human rights-based approaches to addressing the impact of climate change with first, the transition to sustainable food systems and the reverse of over reliance on industrial food systems which fuel the climate crisis. Measures must take into account the historical responsibility of States and businesses.

Second, advancing social protection is essential to protect the right to food. Third, it is crucial to apply **UN guiding principles on business and human rights** and ensure that businesses act responsibly to address climate change. Fourth, financing must be mobilized and appropriate economic and trade policies adopted to fulfill the right to food, while States need to cooperate to enable reforms, including in international financial institutions.

Interactive dialogue

Costa Rica on behalf of **Chile, Ecuador, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay** stated that between 2020 and 2021, Latin America **lost 2.6% of its crops** because of climate change which represents a loss of jobs and exacerbation of poverty and inequality. Echoed the High Commissioner’s view that investing in social protection is the first line of defense against food insecurity. **Samoa**, the **Holy See, Brazil, Panama, Sudan** States should have responsibility to urgently integrate human rights into economic systems and socioeconomic policies **Rmenia Ireland**

The **European Union** declared that states must urgently ensure that human rights are fully integrated through their economic system. They have also encouraging the **empowerment and inclusion of women and girls** can advance climate resilience, agricultural productivity. Reminded that the EU and its members are the largest provider of climate finance in the world and leaders in providing humanitarian assistance to victims of food crisis, and reiterated commitment to sustainable responses.

Qatar on behalf of the **Gulf Cooperation Council** called for **new technologies** and creativity in the field of agriculture and agreed with the recommendation on stepping up **international cooperation**. **The GCC** and **Egypt** on behalf of the **Arab group, Kuwait, Pakistan, Oman** expressed concern regarding **food insecurity in Gaza** following Israel's aggression which caused the decimation of agricultural lands and destruction of water cleansing systems, and increase the risk of famine.

The Arab group, **Gambia** on behalf of the **African group, Dominican Republic** on behalf of a group of **small island developing states, as well as Samoa, Timor Leste**, Antigua and Barbuda also reaffirmed the need for developing countries to receive adequate international support to implement these

measures outlined in the report. The African group, **Morocco, Zimbabwe, Peru, Cuba, Paraguay, Brazil, Bangladesh, Uganda, Honduras, India** recalled the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

The African group also drew attention to the rise in food prices caused by crop failure and the loss of livestock due to disease and drought.

The group of small island developing states called for more initiatives dedicated to the early prevention of damage caused by the increase in weather related phenomena affecting crops.

Viet Nam on behalf on **Bangladesh** and the **Philippines**, welcomed the report and asked the High Commissioner how countries, particularly those **relying on export**, can adapt their agricultural practices to ensure food security, enhance resilience to climate change while maintaining stable livelihood and economic prosperity.

Trinidad and Tobago on behalf on **CARICOM** countries mentioned some initiatives and events such as the [25 by 2025 initiative](#) aimed at reducing the region's food import bill by 25% by 2025, the CARICOM [Agreement on Social Security](#) and the 38th FAO regional conference in Guyana as an opportunity for international collaboration.

Luxembourg on behalf of the members of the **group of friends of the responsibility to protect** drew attention to **the linkages between climate change and the atrocity of crimes**, where climate change may heighten risks of genocide and ethnic cleansing. In light of the absence of this issue from climate change discussion, the delegation asked how national and multilateral initiatives could mitigate those risks. **Georgia** also highlighted the linkages between conflict, climate change and food security.

Costa Rica emphasized that degraded ocean is one of the main factors increasing the negative impact of climate change and called for measure for the benefit of populations including farming and coastal communities.

Regarding the report's assertion that high-income countries should support developing countries' investment in social protection systems (para.17), **Saudi Arabia** contended that introducing new obligation that are not contained in the Paris Agreement and that are not agreed upon is not the right path.

The **Food and Agriculture Organization** recalled that food systems are extremely vulnerable and encouraged favoring small scale producers and vulnerable groups.

Sri Lanka mentioned its proposition made at COP28 for a Climate Justice Forum for justice and equity in climate change response.

A few delegation encouraged the promoting the use of traditional knowledge including **Costa Rica** and **Marshall Islands**

More broadly, the delegations of **Luxembourg Germany, the United States of America, Mongolia Botswana, Ecuador, Colombia, Ireland, Sudan**, as well as **UN WOMEN** and **UNFA** supported the protection of the rights and meaningful inclusion of marginalized groups, women and children

A few delegations such as **Pakistan** and **Egypt** stated international financial institutions should scale up financing for climate action and food security, particularly to developing countries.

Some delegation highlighted the importance of technological innovation in food systems such as **India** and the **United Arab Emirates** while delegation from **Indonesia, Malaysia, Antigua and Barbuda** encouraged technology transfer to developing countries.

UNICEF asserted that global food systems needs enhanced regulatory policies to limit the supply and offer of unhealthy foods and to incentivize the sustainable production and consumption of nutritious foods

Togo reported that climate change induces additional costs to the state with budgetary reallocations and an intensification of the debt burden while **Bangladesh** supported a mechanism to resolve sovereign debt workouts based on the participation of all developing countries.

Senegal highlighted the need to transform food systems towards sustainable agricultural practices, encouraging agroecology, the keeping of local seeds and crop diversity. **Honduras** noted with concern that four companies take over 60% of the seeds market and a high percentage of pesticides.

International Development Law Organization called for enhanced empowerment of the most food insecure people to use human rights law and pathways to justice to realize their rights, including the rights to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

Several international cooperation initiatives were highlighted by States, for example [USA/UAE agriculture innovation mission](#), Saudi Arabia's Green [Middle East initiative](#), the African Union Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils ([VACS](#)) in partnership with the USA and FAO, The EU's [Euroclima](#) involving 33 Latin American and Caribbean countries

Many NGOs including **Caritas** and **FIAN** emphasized the need to enable small farmers and empower marginalized groups in the transition to more sustainable food systems.

Eco Fawn urged the High Commissioner to include the concerns for invasive weeds in its report.

FIAN also note with concern that the right to food is increasingly under threat through Intellectual property regimes and digitalization and biotechnologies. States should adopt regulatory measures in this regard.

Institute for Human Rights was concerned about potential misuse of Azerbaijan's COP 29 presidency and political wit washing, as well as denouncing the crackdown on civic space since the announcement of the presidency.

CIEL highlighted that fossil-based agrochemicals used in industrial food production to sustain monoculture systems do not offer long-term solutions to food insecurity.