

Wednesday , 14 October 8:30– 9:30

Iraq Room

Climate change, food security and nutrition: cultivating sustainable diets and food systems

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ORGANIZERS

Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN)

Agriculture for Impact & The Montpellier Panel

Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition

The John Kufuor Foundation

Abstract: Achieving food security and improved nutrition (under nutrition and obesity) for smallholder farmers in countries impacted by effects of climate change requires commitment and action at all policy levels. Climate smart agriculture must consider options for investments through a nutrition and diet quality lens. More productive, resilient and diverse food systems represent the best form of social protection for vulnerable rural families, but such systems need to be promoted through appropriate and sustained policy choices. The International Year of Soils and ongoing climate change negotiations together present an opportunity to address these challenges.

Malnutrition in all its forms is already undermining the health and economic opportunities of 1 in 4 people in Africa, having ripple effects beyond affected individuals to society as a whole. Women and young children are particularly vulnerable. As diets are fast changing, it becomes critical to better manage food systems in the context of climate change. This side event will combine experts to explore the policies needed to achieve food and nutrition security under climate change, including ensuring that agriculture delivers high quality diets. The panel will focus on increased agriculture productivity, resilience of poor households, sustainable agricultural practices and ecosystems, biodiversity and integration of nutrition into food systems.

KEYWORDS: Agriculture , Climate Change , Smallholder farmers, Agriculture-nutrition

Languages: EN

Refreshments

Summary: The food price crisis of 2007/8 demonstrated that as people are no longer able to afford to buy food for themselves and their families - be it due to rising prices or lower incomes - they not only go to bed hungry, but the food they do eat is of a lower quality with less nutritional value. This is a big challenge and particularly problematic for pregnant women and young children and is likely to affect both poorer, developing countries *and* rich countries. Although the Millennium Development Goals succeeded in halving the number of malnourished children in many countries around the world, climate change now adds increased complexity. Climate change not only affects crop yields, but also food quality and safety, and the reliability of its delivery to consumers. Sandy Thomas, Director of the Global Panel, gave opening remarks at the event, followed by Neil Briscoe, chair of the discussion. Amb. Briscoe argued that it is smallholder farmers who are most vulnerable to extreme weather, and that the nutritional value of crops can be easily susceptible to droughts, pests and diseases. High CO2 levels may decrease the quality of food. He underlined this with the notion that over- or under-nutrition currently affects 1 in 4 people in Africa, a worrying statistic that has repercussions far beyond the shores of the continent. If we are to not only feed the world, but feed it nutritious foods, we must use land intelligently. Tom Arnold (IIEA) explained that by the end of this century, altered climates will mean that 40% of the land surface in the world will need to adapt. In every coming decade to 2050 agricultural output is set to fall by 2%, while the demand for food will rise by 14%. Regions such as sub-Saharan Africa already bear the brunt of malnutrition, and rely most heavily on smallholder agriculture. Simply producing more staples may bring relief from hunger, but it will not end malnutrition and it will not make agriculture resilient in the face of climate change. The third speaker, David Radcliffe, member of the Montpellier Panel, highlighted that healthy landscapes not only store more carbon in the soil, vegetation and fauna, but with proper management can integrate adaptation and mitigation interventions, making them increasingly resilient to climatic stresses. Simbarashe Sibanda , FANRPAN, gave insight into the ATONU programme, which asks the question “what can agriculture do for nutrition?” With pilots in Ethiopia and Tanzania, it hopes to address the need for better data to demonstrate the impact nutritious food can have. According to Dr Sibanda, agricultural programs have tended to take nutrition for granted as a side effect of better agricultural outputs. However, this is not necessarily the case, and climate change is likely to present an increased challenge. By focussing on women of childbearing age and children in their critical first 1000 days, the ATONU project recognises that agriculture must become nutrition sensitive and advocates for interventions which are not only multisectoral, but location specific. For example, in more remote areas smallholders may not engage in local markets very often, so all of the nutrients they need must be available from what they are able to grow. Encouraging policy makers to view agriculture through a nutrition lens, while tracking the decision making at the household level, ATONU hopes to see better gender dynamics and behaviour change. According to the final speaker, Bernard Rey (EC), the European Union (EU) currently spends one billion Euros per year on projects around the world that focus on improving the nutritional value of food. The EU has also pledged three billion Euros over the next 10 years with the aim of reducing stunting in seven million children.