Ensuring food security and good nutrition for all in a sustainable manner is one of the main challenges of our time and at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Globally, 795 million people are undernourished, more than two billion people are affected by micronutrient deficiencies and about one in four children under the age of five is stunted. At the same time 1.9 billion people are overweight of whom 600 million are obese.

Climate change affects nutritional status and dietary choices through impacts on food production, food access, water safety, sanitation, livelihoods and caregiving. If current trends continue, it is estimated that an additional 1-3 billion people will be affected by water scarcity and 200-600 million will suffer from hunger by 2080, particularly in sub-Saharan African countries, and millions of people will be affected by the multiple burdens of malnutrition.

Food systems and dietary choices are themselves major contributors to climate change. Food systems are estimated to produce around a quarter of total global greenhouse gas emissions, including food production, post-harvest processes, as well as from food loss and waste. Dietary patterns also strongly influence some of the factors that drive climate change.

Ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture, as well as taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts are directly addressed in several global commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals, the 2015 Paris Agreement, the Framework for Action adopted by the 2014 Second International Conference on Nutrition, and the UN General Assembly declaration of the Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025.

Transforming food systems to become more nutrition-sensitive and climate-smart calls for multiple interventions and requires collective actions. Strengthening policy frameworks and institutional arrangements while ensuring coherence at a cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial/inter-institutional level will be critical to leveraging both public and private sector investments to enable a transformational change in food systems. Increasing financial investments will be critical for enabling synergies between nutrition-sensitive and climate-smart agriculture and food systems.

The objective of this side event is to bring attention to the convergence between actions to address climate change and malnutrition, and present options for response through a food systems approach illustrated by country examples.