Press Release / COP23 Agriculture Day

Brighter Green Discussion Paper Calls for Coordinated Action on Climate Change, Agriculture, Food Systems & Sustainable Diets

Fast-changing food environments are challenging public health, fueling unsustainable land use and natural resource exploitation, and scrambling prospects of meeting Paris Agreement goals

Bonn, 10 November 2017: Brighter Green's new discussion paper, *Chronic Disease, Changing Diets, and Sustainability: The Globalization of Western-style Eating and its Implications*, illuminates the public health and environmental challenges created by the rapid adoption in Africa, Asia, and Latin America of diets high in fats, sugar, processed foods, and salt. Fueled by the growth of industrial agriculture, trade agreements, marketing, and the power of "Big Food", global plates are becoming more like those in the U.S. – and, as a result, less healthy, less sustainable, and less equitable.

Five country case studies (Brazil, China, Mexico, South Africa, India) provide cautionary examples of how an increase in non-communicable diseases almost always accompanies a changing food environment. Authored by U.S.-based public health educator Judy Bankman, the paper was written to help accelerate action on the critical intersections of diet, health, and the environment, including climate change. *Chronic Disease, Changing Diets, and Sustainability* offers concrete proposals for policymakers, public health professionals, educators, and individuals in the global South and North.

These include changes in fiscal measures, stronger regulation, redirection of agricultural subsidies, a rethinking of health systems, shifts in international development priorities and funding, along with increased public engagement. The paper also calls for policymakers to expose the nutritional deficiencies and unhealthy excess baked into the standard Western diet and invest in food systems that truly work for people and the planet.

Chronic Disease, Changing Diets, and Sustainability: The Globalization of Western-style Eating and Its Implications can be downloaded here*:*
http://brightergreen.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/brighter_green_public_health_paper.pdf

Many factors are contributing to the shift in how billions of the world's people eat and the food environment in which they do so: from trade liberalization and rural–urban migration to the growing omnipresence of "big food" brands such as KFC, McDonald's, and Coca-Cola. In addition, the methods of agriculture used to produce the mainstays of the Western diet (i.e., livestock, corn, and soybeans) have led to massive soil erosion, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, discussion of the critical intersections of diet, health, and the environment has gained momentum in recent years.

The intersection of changing diets and chronic disease is a complex one and cannot be examined without exploring the role of agriculture and its industrialization. As widespread adoption of the

Western-style diet drives negative public health outcomes, the methods of agriculture used to produce the staples of this way of eating – especially large-scale animal agriculture and production of livestock feed – also drive environmental degradation.

The food system as a whole (i.e., farming, transportation, and packing, among other facets) contributes 20 to 30 percent of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). According to the FAO, the global livestock sector accounts for 14.5 percent of anthropogenic GHGs.

Methane gas, although it is lower in concentration in Earth's atmosphere than CO2 is much more efficient in trapping heat. Methane emissions result mainly through the belching and flatulence of ruminant livestock, as well as storage of manure. Nitrous oxide, another major greenhouse gas, is also released primarily through animal waste. According to the World Resources Institute, global emissions from agriculture increased by eight percent from 1990 to 2010, with population growth and dietary change being the greatest drivers.

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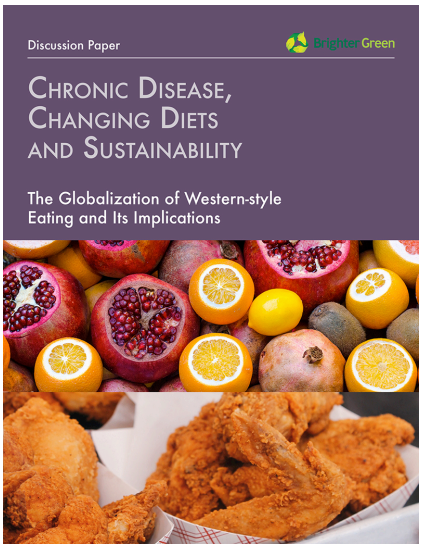

Related COP23 Side Event: Sunday, 12 November, 11:30-1 p.m., Meeting Room 4/ Bonn Zone

Livestock, Biosequestration & Forests: Closing the 'Reality Gap' in Climate, Land Use & Finance
The top five meat and dairy companies combined emit more than either Exxon, Shell or BP. Large-scale biosequestration proposals say the compensate such GHG emissions, but lead to prioritisation of monoculture tree plantations, with devastating impacts on climate resilience, biodiversity, and the lands and livelihoods of indigenous peoples, local communities and women. Climate finance and policies in the livestock and forest sectors are not only interrelated but will determine whether we get on a 1.5 degree pathway without compromising environmental integrity, food security and human rights. A roundtable of experts from various regions will discuss how climate policy and finance can be redirected to address the real drivers of global warming in a just way.