

Enabling Ambition and Accelerating Implementation through Food Systems Action

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To support the pursuit of ambitious, actionable solutions, we ask the Belém Mission to 1.5 to recognize the comprehensive and holistic integration of food systems into NDCs as a key opportunity to enable and accelerate NDC ambition.

Food systems stand at the nexus of the “interlinked global crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and land and ocean degradation” highlighted by the Global Mutirão Decision.¹ The global food system generates approximately one-third of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and food systems emissions alone could jeopardize the 1.5°C target.² Food systems action is also essential for adapting to the increasing impacts of climate change on food systems and ensuring food security under climate change.

Current NDCs reveal a consistent pattern: although food systems are increasingly acknowledged as a critical sector for climate action, the limited depth and breadth of their integration represents a significant untapped opportunity to increase climate ambition while strengthening co-benefits across the sustainable development goals. To facilitate a transition toward a more just and sustainable food system that supports climate progress, NDCs should encompass all stages of the food system—from production through consumption and waste.

Food Systems Action in NDCs

In the lead up to COP30, the [Food Systems NDC Scorecard](#)—collaborative initiative aimed at assessing how well food systems are integrated into NDCs—conducted in-depth assessments of 10 NDCs. The Food Systems NDC Scorecard developed and applied a rigorous and context-sensitive methodology, serving both as a diagnostic tool and a roadmap to help countries improve food system integration in climate policies. The resulting assessments indicated that while there are examples of ambitious food systems action, many countries are not yet fully embracing the potential benefits of incorporating food systems into their climate policies.

The Food Systems NDC Scorecard found that some NDCs focused action on only a few stages of the food system—often production. In particular, the assessments highlighted additional opportunities to incorporate demand-side measures, including policies related to diets and food loss and waste. For countries with high-impact dietary patterns, the assessments found that very few NDCs included measures to address shifting away from such high-impact dietary patterns. Finally, among the assessed NDCs, several contained food systems policies with high-risks of negative trade offs, including expansion of agricultural frontier and intensification of animal agriculture.

An additional assessment, the recently released [Food Forward NDCs Report](#), provides an updated evaluation of how the latest round of NDCs integrates food systems measures. As part

¹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, *Global Mutirão: Uniting Humanity in a Global Mobilization Against Climate Change*, Decision 1/CMA.7, FCCC/PA/CMA/2025/19/Add.1, at 2–3 (Mar. 30, 2026).

² Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change* 1322, 1285 (P.R. Shukla et al. eds., Cambridge Univ. Press 2022).

of the broader Food Forward NDCs initiative, the report reviews 116 NDCs, offering actionable insights to support implementation. The findings of the report highlight that ambition on agrifood systems is rising in comparison to past rounds of NDCs, but notable gaps remain, especially in addressing food loss and waste and consumption measures.

Opportunities Across the Food System

Many NDCs have yet to incorporate the full potential of holistically integrating food systems into climate action. While the latest assessment finds that nearly all NDCs (97%) include agrifood system measures, measures to address food loss and waste as well as shifting diets and improving nutrition remain critical gaps.³ By expanding the scope of NDCs to include action across all stages of the food system, countries can realize a largely untapped opportunity for increasing ambition.

Actions related to food consumption, including dietary patterns, nutrition, and food access, remain underrepresented in NDCs with only 26% of NDCs including diet-related measures and only 20% of NDCs 3.0 explicitly including nutrition-related measures.⁴ The Food Systems NDC Scorecard assessment found Switzerland's NDC to be a notable exception to this gap, with strong examples of diet-related measures, including an objective to reduce the greenhouse gas footprint of diets per capita by at least two thirds by 2050.⁵ At a global level, dietary change presents an opportunity to reduce emissions up to 8 GtCO₂e per year by 2050—comparable in scale to all supply-side food production improvements combined.⁶

Food loss and waste also remains a critical gap despite being a well-documented source of emissions. The Food Forward NDCs report found that only 28% of NDCs 3.0 include measures to address food loss and waste.⁷ Estimates put food loss and waste at 8–10% of global GHG emissions, with 13% of produced food lost post-harvest and an additional 19% lost as waste prior to reaching the market or after entering consumer households.^{8,9} Where food waste compounds pressures on land use, reducing it eases them—sparing arable land from unnecessary degradation, cutting emissions, and reinforcing long-term food security.

Beyond gaps in coverage, some NDCs include high-risk food systems policies that could undermine the climate objectives they set out to serve. By including such maladaptations within their NDCs, countries risk unintentionally implementing strategies with negative long-term consequences. The Food Systems NDC Scorecard identified examples of such high-risk policies within NDCs, including plans to increase biofuel production, plans to increase intensification of animal agriculture, and the application of a controversial approach to methane accounting.¹⁰

3 Food Forward NDCs, Policy Brief 4 (June 2026), <https://climatefocus.com/publications/foodforwardndcs2026/>

4 *Id.* at 13.

5 Food Systems NDC Scorecard, Switzerland Assessment, <https://foodsystemsndcscorecard.org/assessments>

6 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change and Land: An IPCC Special Report on Climate Change, Desertification, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Food Security, and Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Terrestrial Ecosystems*, 490 (IPCC ed., 2019).

7 Food Forward NDCs, *supra* note 3, at 7.

8 *Climate Change and Land*, *supra* note 7, at 492.

9 Food Forward NDCs, *supra* note 3, at 12.

10 Food Systems NDC Scorecard, Brazil Assessment and New Zealand Assessment, <https://foodsystemsndcscorecard.org/assessments>. The Brazil Assessment draws on Brazil's Nationally Determined Contribution (pp. 14–15) and its Plan for Adaptation and Low Carbon Emission in Agriculture (ABC+ Plan, pp. 22, 80–81).

An ecosystem of tools is already in place to support Parties in raising their ambition and accelerating implementation of food system and climate action—including the Food Forward NDCs toolkit, National Food System Transformation Pathways, and the Food Systems NDC Scorecard in addition to existing domestic policies on agriculture, food security, nutrition, and climate change.

Conclusion

The comprehensive and holistic integration of food system actions across all stages—incorporating critical demand-side measures alongside supply-side measures—is essential for unlocking the substantial untapped opportunities necessary to meet the 1.5°C goal.

We urge the Belém Mission 1.5 to elevate food systems as a high-impact, priority sector, which can substantially advance climate action while concurrently delivering wide-ranging co-benefits, from nutrition and health to nature and biodiversity. By further considering the above trends of food systems within existing NDCs, Belém Mission 1.5 can empower Parties to increase ambition and accelerate implementation, securing a just and sustainable food system for the global climate agenda.

Supporting Organizations

Mercy For Animals

Global Law Alliance for Animals and the Environment at Lewis & Clark Law School

Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

Climate Focus

WWF (World Wide Fund For Nature)