

## Initiative for Climate Action and Nutrition (I-CAN) - Key Messages on the Road to COP28

*I-CAN: catalyse, mobilise, connect and advocate for integrated climate and nutrition action. Together we can realise the promise of the sustainable development goals for a thriving future for people and the planet*

### I-CAN Key Messages Overview

Climate change and malnutrition are two of the greatest challenges facing humanity today. These twin challenges are inexorably linked and therefore require joined-up action - climate change cannot be confronted without addressing nutrition and vice versa. Until recently, actions taken to address these challenges have taken place independently of each other, in two systems that rarely interacted. Bringing together these two areas, tackling the challenges in tandem and finding viable solutions to the two biggest barriers to our long-term sustainable development was the motivation for the launch of the Initiative for Climate Change and Nutrition (I-CAN) by the Government of Egypt at COP27.

I-CAN is a multi-stakeholder multi-sectoral global flagship initiative that will help foster collaboration to accelerate transformative action to address the critical intersection of climate change and nutrition. We need climate action that positively impacts food, water and sanitation, social protection, and health systems, which can help deliver better nutrition. And good nutrition leads to healthy populations, which are needed for thriving economies, which in turn enable us to tackle climate change effectively. I-CAN aims to build a strong alliance across nutrition and climate communities, strengthen existing efforts and take action to address the gaps, as well as developing an evidence base of integrated climate and nutrition action.

The impacts and exposure to risk factors of climate change and nutrition are not gender neutral. Inequalities in access to health and nutrition services and social protection, control over resources, agency and decision-making power are underlying drivers of malnutrition and climate change. Therefore I-CAN recognises that elevating the education, power and status of women needs to be central to the debate about solutions to address the global syndemic of obesity, undernutrition and climate change.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this document, and the accompanying Issues and Key Facts document, is to provide compelling and easy-to-use messages, alongside key evidence underpinning them, to support efforts to accelerate transformative action at the climate-nutrition nexus. It sets out the primary messages and fundamental case for why those seeking to respond to the escalating climate change, health emergencies, compound food crises and water scarcity stand to gain significantly by working together where these issues intersect. The messages will be used on the road to COP28, where it is envisaged to have the importance of integrated action for climate and nutrition come out clearly in the outcome document of COP28.

Examples for action for co-benefits and I-CAN calls to action are also provided. The I-CAN calls to action set out areas tracked by I-CAN to assess future progress. Provided examples can be adapted to national contexts to address the interlinked challenges of climate change and malnutrition in all its forms.

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<sup>1</sup> Swinburn et al, 2019. The Global Syndemic of Obesity, Undernutrition, and Climate Change: The Lancet Commission report. Lancet . 2019 Feb 23;393(10173):791-846. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(18)32822-8. Epub 2019 Jan 27

## The Four I-CAN Pillars

I-CAN has identified four key pillars that together comprise the main areas of action within which collaboration should occur to advance progress at the intersection of climate and nutrition. I-CAN calls to action have been outlined under each pillar:

- I. **Implementation, action and support:** Climate change and nutrition are complex issues that require a comprehensive and collaborative approach at all levels for mutual gains to be realised. Currently, significant gains that could be made through integrated implementation, action and support are being missed.

*I-CAN Calls to Action:*

- Support NDC processes to ensure the integration of nutrition related actions in climate resilient and sustainable systems
- Support NAP processes to integrate climate-resilient nutrition, and integration of nutrition-related actions in NAPs

- II. **Capacity building, data and knowledge transfer:** Accountability, progress-tracking and shared learning are all catalytic for increasing joint action on climate and nutrition.

*I-CAN Calls to Action:*

- Advocate for increased public financing directed towards research and development that is positive for nutrition and climate
- Share and highlight examples of nutrition-promoting climate actions and climate-promoting nutrition actions
- Support the generation of more global evidence linking dietary data to environmental metrics that can be used by decision makers

- III. **Policy and strategy:** There are a range of policy approaches and strategies that governments can adapt to their national context and deploy to make nutrition-sensitive, climate-smart systems a reality and generate a virtuous cycle of healthier people and stronger communities that can drive sustainable development.

*I-CAN Calls to Action:*

- Advocate for the promotion and scale up of diversified crop production including nutritious foods from climate-smart agricultural practices such as neglected underutilized species (NUS) and fortified/biofortified crops and staple foods
- Advocate for and support the implementation of regional and national food-based dietary guidelines that incorporate environmental considerations, and set targets for health and sustainable consumption (e.g. targets for red and processed meats)
- Advocate for the development and implementation of food based dietary guidelines that incorporate nutrition and climate considerations, especially for children
- Advocate for the inclusion of climate considerations into food procurement decisions for food in public settings (e.g. school meals and school feeding, health and care facilities) as well as safety nets and emergency programmes
- Support the strengthening of national food control systems to adapt to the increased food safety risks associated with climate change, in line with the WHO Global Strategy on Food Safety 2022-2030

- IV. **Investing in climate and nutrition:** Significant returns can be achieved through the scaling up of investments that are both climate-smart and nutrition-sensitive.

*I-CAN Calls to Action:*

- Raise visibility on gaps in funding for ODA to investments that are both climate-smart and nutrition-sensitive
- Quantify the percentage of budgets and extra-budgetary resources allocated to projects that are climate-smart and nutrition-sensitive

## I-CAN Key Messages:

- 1. The Climate Nutrition Nexus:** Climate change and malnutrition are two of the greatest challenges facing humanity today. They are intrinsically interconnected and tackling them together is vital if we are to accelerate progress towards a thriving population and planet.
- 2. The systems interconnecting climate and nutrition:** Climate and nutrition outcomes are interconnected through the pathways of food systems, water systems, social protection systems, and health systems. Nutrition is where these systems come together and actions within these systems affect climate mitigation and adaptation.
- 3. Food Systems:** Food systems are both a significant driver and victim of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. Fully functioning sustainable food systems increase the yield and availability of nutritious foods, reduce food loss and waste, enable healthy diets for all and reduce all forms of malnutrition both today and in the future. Sustainable food systems decrease global greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation, improve water and land management, promote biodiversity and increase climate resilience.  
*Examples of integrated actions:*
  - Diversify food production
  - Shift to healthy diets
  - Reduce food loss and food waste
- 4. Water Systems:** Climate change is reducing access to clean water, while the growing demand for water is contributing to climate change. Clean water is essential for preparing safe, nutritious food, ensuring appropriate sanitation, and providing for hygienic needs; while better water governance and sustainable water solutions can improve carbon storage and resilience to extreme events and climate induced disruptions in the water cycle.  
*Examples of integrated actions:*
  - Promote holistic water governance
  - Enhance efficient and adaptive water management
  - Ensure adequate WASH financing
- 5. Social Protection Systems:** Social protection systems have an important role to play in both building resilience to and mitigating against climate change impacts and in providing key safety nets to provide for social needs in the face of poverty and vulnerability that have direct impacts on nutrition outcomes. Support to the most vulnerable through nutrition-sensitive, climate-smart social protection systems is critical for sustainable development.  
*Examples of integrated actions:*
  - Promote positive coping strategies
  - Address economic and social barriers
  - Increase investment in climate-smart activities
- 6. Health Systems:** The climate crisis is the greatest single threat to human health in the 21st century. At the same time, health sector activities are contributing to global carbon emissions, natural resource degradation, and pollution. Strong health systems that adapt to changing health needs amidst the climate crisis are vital for good nutrition and improved health outcomes. Making them climate-smart means they can also contribute to national net-zero goals and strengthen resilient healthcare.  
*Examples of integrated actions:*
  - Build climate resilient health systems
  - Secure coverage of essential nutrition actions across health service levels
  - Integrate One Health approach

## **Gender is a cross-cutting issue**

7. **Gender mainstreaming in the climate nutrition nexus:** Women and girls are disproportionately affected by climate change and all forms of malnutrition, while holding unique knowledge and perspectives that can contribute to solutions. Inequalities in access to health and nutrition services and social protection, control over resources, agency and decision-making power are underlying drivers of both crises. A transformative approach that advocates for gender equality and women's and girls' agency and empowerment is required to achieve impact in the climate-nutrition nexus.

*Examples of integrated actions:*

- Understanding the inequalities and gender gaps through gender analysis